C 08
STA COLL C08BRI



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

https://archive.org/details/b24976933_0006

# POETICAL WORKS OF ROBERT BRIDGES

## VOLUME THE SIXTH CONTAINING


THE FEAST OF BACCHUS . . . p. 1

SECOND PART OF THE HISTORY . . OF NERO . . . . . 123

NOTES . . . . . 275

## LIST OF PREVIOUS EDITIONS

✠

*FEAST OF BACCHUS.*

1. *THE FEAST OF BACCHUS. By Robert Bridges. Privately printed by H. Daniel: Oxford, 1889. Small 4to.*

2. *THE F.O.B. A Comedy in the Latin manner and partly translated from Terence. By Robert Bridges. Published by Geo. Bell & Sons, Covent Garden, and J. & E. Bumpus, Lim., Holborn Bars. 4to.* [1894.]

*NERO.*

1. *NERO. Part 2. From the death of Burrus to the death of Seneca, comprising the conspiracy of Piso. Published by Geo. Bell & Sons, and J. & E. Bumpus.* [1894.]

✠

POETICAL WORKS

of

# ROBERT BRIDGES

## Volume VI



London
Smith, Elder & Co.
15 Waterloo Place
1905

SJA 0x1 c
ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
CLASS C C8 BRI
ACC. 21518
SOURCE
DATE

OXFORD: HORACE HART
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

# THE FEAST OF BACCHUS

A COMEDY
IN THE LATIN MANNER

&

PARTLY TRANSLATED FROM
TERENCE



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

*MENEDEMUS* . . *an Athenian gentleman.*
*CHREMES* . . *a retired Ionian sponge-merchant.*
*CLINIA* . . . . *son to Menedemus.*
*PAMPHILUS* . . . . *son to Chremes.*
*PHILOLACHES* . *an actor, friend to Pamphilus.*

*SOSTRATA* . . . . *wife to Chremes.*
*ANTIPHILA* . *daughter of Chremes, beloved of Clinia.*
*GORGO* . . . . . *beloved of Pamphilus.*

*The scene is in a suburb of Athens, opposite the house of Chremes (L): on the other side is Menedemus' garden (R): this occupies most of the back of the stage: a gate from the garden gives on the stage: between the garden and Chremes' house a road runs down to the city.*

*Duration of time—a few hours of one day. There is no pause in the action, and the whole may be played continuously with a formal break at the end of each act.*

# THE FEAST OF BACCHUS

## ACT · I

*MENEDEMUS seen at work in his garden.*
*CHREMES calling to him over the hedge.*

*CHREMES.*

GOOD morning, sir! good morning!
(*Aside.*) He does not hear me.—Sir!
Good morning!
(*Aside.*) No: he goes on digging away for his life—
Ho! Menedemus! Ho!

*MENEDEMUS.*

Who is it calls?

*Chr.* 'Tis I.

*Men.* Chremes! why, what's the matter?

*Chr.* I only said good morning.

I wish you the compliments of the day. 'Tis the feast of Bacchus.

*Men.* I thank you. The same to you.

*Chr.* I had something to say besides, If you are at leisure.

*Men.* Now?

*Chr.* Yes, now.

*Men.* You see I am busy: But if 'tis a matter of any importance—

*Chr.* Indeed it is.

*Men.* Pray step to the gate: I'll open it for you.

*Chr.* You are very good. (*Aside.*) How fagged he looks!

*Men.* Come in. You will not think me rude, If I ask you to tell your errand while I dig.

*Chr.* Excuse me, 11 My good friend; and your spade, pray you, awhile put down. You must stop working.

*Men.* No: I cannot rest a minute.

*Chr.* I can't allow it indeed. (*Taking the spade.*)

*Men.* Now, sir, you wrong me.

*Chr.* Hey! My word! what a weight it is!

*Men.* It's not too heavy for me.

*Chr.* Come! what's all this? well take it again, but don't refuse me
A moment's attention.
*Men.* Well!
*Chr.* 'Tis a matter concerns you nearly:
So leave your work, and come outside, and sit on the bench,
Where we may talk.
*Men.* Whatever you have to say, Chremes,
May be said here.
*Chr.* No doubt; but better as I propose:
I will not detain you long.
*Men.* What is it?
*Chr.* Sit you down.
*Men.* You have something to say.
*Chr.* Not while you stand.
*Men. (sitting).* Well, as you will.
And now in as few words as may be . . . I am at your service.—
Explain.
*Chr.* Menedemus, although our acquaintance has been but short,
And only dates from the day you bought this piece of land,
And came to live close by me: for little or nought but that

Occasioned it, as you know: yet my respect for you,
Or else your being a neighbour, for that itself, I take it,
Counts in some sort as friendship, makes me bold and free
To give you a piece of advice: the fact is, you seem to me
To be working here in a manner, which both to your time of life
And station, is most unsuitable. What, in Heaven's name,
Can be your object? what do you drive at? To guess your age
You are sixty years at least. There's no one hereabouts
Can shew a better farm, nor more servants upon it:
And yet you do the work yourself, as tho' you had none.
Never do I go out, however early in the morning,
Never come home again, however late at night,
But here I see you digging, hoeing, or at all events
Toiling at something or other. You are never a moment idle,
Nor shew regard for yourself. Now all this can't be done
For pleasure, that I am sure of, and as for any profit,
Why, if you only applied half the energy
To stirring up your servants, both you and your farm

Would do much better.

*Men.* Have you so much spare time then, Chremes,
Left from your own affairs to meddle with other people's?
The which moreover do not concern you.

*Chr.* I am a man.
Nought which concerns mankind concerns not me, I think.
Ere I advise, I'd first enquire what 'tis you do; 49
If well, to learn by example; if ill, then to dissuade.

*Men.* My duty is this: do you as best may suit yourself.

*Chr.* What man can say 'tis right for him to torment himself?

*Men.* I can.

*Chr.* If it is any sorrow or trouble that has driven you to this,
I am very sorry. But . . . what is it? Tell me, I pray.
Whatever can you have done, that calls for such a penance?

*Men.* Ay me!

*Chr.* Come! don't give way: confide to me this affair.
Trust me: keep nothing back, I entreat you: have no fear.
Surely I may either help, or advise, or at least console you.

*Men.* You really wish to know?
*Chr.* Yes, for the reason I gave.
*Men.* I'll tell you.
*Chr.* What is it?
*Men.* I have an only son, Chremes—
Alas what say I? have? had I should rather say;
For whether now I have or not, I cannot tell. 62
*Chr.* How so?
*Men.* You shall hear: attend. There came to live in the city
A poor old widow woman from Corinth. She had a daughter,
With whom my son, who is just of age, fell madly in love,
Was even at the point to marry: and all without my knowledge.
However it came to my ears; and then I began to treat him
Unkindly, and not in the way to deal with a love-sick lad;
But after the usual dictatorial manner of fathers. 69
I never left him in peace. *Don't think, my fine fellow,*
I'd say, *that you'll be allowed to continue behaving thus,*
*While I am alive to prevent it; running after a girl*
*And talking of marrying too: you are very much mistaken,*
*Clinia, if you think that. You don't know me. I am glad*

*To have you called my son, while you respect your honour;*
*But if you once forget it, I shall find a means,*
*And one you will not like, of asserting my own. All this*
*I see very plainly,* I said, *has come from idle habits.*
*You have not enough to do. When I was your age*
*I did not fritter away my time in making love;*
*But finding my pockets empty, set out for Asia,*
*And won myself distinction and fortune in foreign service.*
At last, Chremes, it came to this: the poor young fellow,
Continually hearing the same thing put so strongly to him,
Gave in: he thought my age and due regard for his welfare
Were likely to shew him a wiser and more prudent course
Than his own feelings;—he left the country, and went to fight
Under the king of Persia.

*Chr.* Indeed?

*Men.* He started off
One day without a word. He has now been gone six months.

*Chr.* Both were to blame; however I think the step that he took
Was the act of a modest and not unmanly disposition.

*Men.* I enquired of some of his friends, and when
I learnt the truth,
I returned home to my house miserable, my mind
Unhinged—distracted with grief. I sat me down; my servants
Came running to know my pleasure; some drew off my shoes,
Others were hastening to and fro to prepare my dinner,
Each anxious by doing his best to lessen the pain
Of my great misfortune: in vain: the sight of them made me think,
'What! is it then for me alone that all these persons
So busily are engaged? all for my comfort?
For me is it that so many women are spinning; for me
This great household expense & luxury are maintained?
And my only son, who in all should equally share with me—
Nay, should have the larger share, since at his age he is able
Better to use such things & enjoy them—him, poor boy,
I have driven out of the house by my unkindness. No,
I had rather die than do it. While he leads a life
Of poverty & of hardship, exiled from home & country
By my severe treatment, so long will I visit
His punishment on myself, labouring, fasting, saving,
Serving and slaving for him.' I began there and then;

I stripped the house for a sale, left nothing in it, not a dish
To eat off, not a coat to put on. I collected everything:
And as for the men and maids, excepting such as were able
To work the cost of their living out on my fields, I sent them
To market and sold them; I put up a notice, THIS HOUSE TO LET;
And setting the price of all, some fifty talents, together,
I bought this farm, and am well convinced at heart, Chremes,
That in making myself miserable I act more justly
Towards him, my absent son; and that 'twere crime to indulge
In any comfort, till he return home safe again
To share it with me.
*Chr.* I see that you are a kind father;
And he, I think, had been a dutiful son, if treated
With moderation and judgment: but look, you did not know
Each other well enough: a common fault to observe
In family life, and one destructive of happiness.
You never let him perceive how dear he was to you,

So he dared not confide in you, when it was his duty:
To have done the one or other had spared you this misfortune.
*Men.* 'Tis as you say, I admit; but I was the more to blame.
*Chr.* True. And to lose a child is deplorable. I had myself
The same misfortune without my fault. A daughter it was,
Stolen from me I know not how: my second child, a babe.
That's fifteen years ago. I was living at Ephesus,
Where such events are regarded as commonish accidents.
I know not where she was taken, have never heard of her since;
And tho' I have not forgot it, my own experience is,
One does entirely get over the sort of thing—I assure you.
*Men.* 'Tis kind of you thus to recall your sorrow to comfort mine.
My condolence can make a distinction: the child you lost
Was a daughter, a babe, you say. Clinia was my only son,

Grown up. Besides you admit you were not at all
to blame:
I brought this on myself. See, friend, the difference!
*Chr.* However I see no reason yet to despair,
Menedemus.
You will have him safe at home again, and soon,
I am sure.
*Men.* The gods grant it.
*Chr.* They will. And now, 'tis the
feast of Bacchus;
We keep a birthday too. I hope, if it is agreeable,
That you will come and dine at my house.
*Men.* I can't.
*Chr.* Why not?
Do pray now, after all you have done, allow yourself
This little relaxation. Think your absent son
Is asking you through me.
*Men.* It is not right that I,
Who have driven him into hardships, should spend
my time in pleasures.
*Chr.* You will not change your mind?
*Men.* No.
*Chr.* Then I'll say good-bye.
*Men.* Good-bye. [*Exit.*
*Chr.* A tear, I do believe; I am sorry for him.
'Tis lamentable to see goodness punished thus

For lack of a little wisdom. Folly brings remorse,
And again remorse folly: they tread the circle; and he
Would mend one fault by another, and on himself revenge
The wrong he has done his son. And that wrong too was not
A real unkindness: no: mere want of common sense;
It's what I am always saying,—that is evil. To quote
From the very profoundest of authors, my favourite Sophocles,
*Wisdom is far away the chiefest of happiness.*
Of course a man may be happy, although he has lost his son,
If it cannot be charged to his fault. In spite of the best intentions
Menedemus is much to blame. Poor fellow, but I may assist him,
And if I can, I will. I love to help a neighbour;
'Tis pleasure as well as duty: because it is a pleasure
To be wiser than others, and even a friend's predicament
Increases the satisfaction I feel, when I think how well
My own household is managed. But stay, 'tis time I went

To see that all's in order for the feast we hold
to-night.
There are one or two old friends, who'd take it much
amiss
Did I not ask them. Now at once I'll go and find
them. [*Exit.*

*Enter Pamphilus and Clinia.*

*PAMPHILUS.*

That queer old boy's my father: didn't you know him?

*CLINIA.*

No.
How should I? but his name I know—Chremes.

*Pam.* You have it.
Take care he hear not your name.

*Clin.* Why so, Pamphilus?
What can he know of me? and if he knew . . .

*Pam.* See, Clinia,
That is our house, & here the hedge & paling bounds
Your father's.

*Clin.* Here?

*Pam.* You see what a stroke of luck it was
To meet me when you did. You must have betrayed
yourself 181
By making enquiries; but I at the merest hint have
led you

Straight to the place: besides, if you wish to be near
your father
Without his knowing that you are returned, my
governor
Can put you up.
*Clin.* Is it here?
*Pam.* Yes, there.
*Clin.* For heaven's sake
Be careful; may he not see me?
*Pam.* If he looked over the myrtles
No doubt he might.
*Clin.* Hush! hush! He'll hear you.
*Pam.* All serene.
He's not this side: stand there: I'll go & spy around.
Keep out of sight.
*Clin.* Stay, Pamphilus; are you really sure
This is my father's?
*Pam.* This is the place they told me, and here
A Menedemus lives, and has for the last six months.
We're right enough.
*Clin.* I fear he'll see us: pray come back.
*Pam.* I thought you wished to see him.
*Clin.* Ay, and so I do;
But nothing less in the world, if it should be the
occasion 194
Of his seeing me.

*Pam.* Trust me: he won't. I'll speer about.
He's sure to be digging somewhere near.
*Clin.* Digging?
*Pam.* If not,
It is not old Menedemus. (*Goes round peering.*)
*Clin.* Oh what can it mean,
My father's sudden change of home and manner of life?
He that so loved the town: himself the very centre
Of all good company, the best invited man,
And most besought in Athens. Nothing but great disgust
Could thus have turned his temper. I am the cause. and one
Of two things it must be; either he is more offended with me
Than I supposed; or else, and this I hope and think,
My flight, breaking the bond that surely was the nearest
And dearest to him, has wrought upon him, and now he turns
And will consent: if that, 'tis well I am here: if not,
He must not come to know I am back in Athens: nay,
'Twould only vex him more: I must hide from him still:

For though there is nothing in the extremest scope of duty
In which I would not obey him but one thing, 'tis this thing
I am pledged to. Love absolves me. Nay, 'tis not for him
I am now returned. I have chosen; I am not ashamed: I made
One dutiful effort—oh intolerable! I am come,
Sweetest Antiphila, to marry thee, and I will marry thee;
Without consent, if must be, against my father's will—
Yet now I have hope; and whether rightly or wrongly I hope
I must discover.

(*Pamphilus returns to Clinia.*)

*Pam.* It's very funny: he's not to be seen.

*Clin.* What shall I do?

*Pam.* To-day's my birthday, Clinia:
We have asked some friends to come: if you will be my guest,
Our house is very handy. No one shall hear your name.
My father will not suspect you.

*Clin.* I thank you. There's no need.

*Pam.* I'll call you Clitipho.

*Clin.* No, no, I am ill-disposed
For company. Pray excuse me. Besides I am sure your father
Must be acquainted with mine.
*Pam.* I doubt it. He often says
He wonders who in the world his eccentric neighbour is.
But whether he knows or not we'll soon find out: for look,
He is coming down the road. Stand back where you can hear;
And if he has any knowledge that can be of use to you,
I'll worm it out.

*Re-enter Chremes.*

*Chr.* What are you doing, Pamphilus,
Looking over the hedge into our neighbour's garden?
Do you not know how vulgar curiosity is?
Spying and prying thus into other folk's affairs.
I am quite ashamed of you, sir!
*Pam.* I was only looking to see
If I could catch a glimpse of old Menedemus, father.
I've found out something about him.
*Chr.* Eh! and what is that?
*Pam.* Have you ever heard of Clinia?
*Chr.* Clinia, Clinia? Yes—

Of course, why he's Menedemus' son, who is now in Persia.

I know about him.

*Pam.* Well, he's an old school-friend of mine.

*Chr.* Is he?

*Pam.* You know when first I came to school at Athens,

He was kind to me, and afterwards, when we all came here to live,

I met him again. I never dreamed that 'twas his father,

Who took this place next door. I used to hear he was quite

A different sort of person.

*Chr.* Ay, no doubt he was.

The trouble his son has brought upon him has broke him down.

*Pam.* Why, Clinia had no debts.

*Chr.* Perhaps he had no debts:

But I could tell you more about him than you imagine.

I have never been able to take any pleasure, Pamphilus,

In any one of your friendships; and now I am grieved to find

You are intimate with this foolish, dissolute young man.

Evil communications corrupt good manners.

*Pam.* Clinia is not that sort at all.

*Chr.* You do not know.

*Pam.* I know he fell in love with a girl that lives in the town,

And wanted to marry her, only his father would not hear of it,

And sent him off to Asia, and now—

*Chr.* He ran away.

*Pam.* And if he did, no wonder, considering his father's treatment.

*Chr.* He should not have done so.

*Pam.* I take it his father's sorry now.

*Chr.* Of course all parents are always sorry for their sons' misconduct.

*Pam.* But he has far more cause to be sorry now for his own.

*Chr.* You think so?

*Pam.* Yes, I do.

*Chr.* (*aside*). I must not let my son
Know how this old man dotes. If he should think all fathers
As soft as poor Menedemus, pretty pranks he'd play me!

*Pam.* What were you saying?

*Chr.* Ha! I'll tell you what I was saying;
That in any case his duty was to have stayed at home.

'Tis possible that his father was somewhat more severe
Than he found pleasant; but still he should have put up with it.
For whom sh^d a lad submit to, if not to his own father?
Ought his father, tell me, to have fallen in with him,
Or he with his father? And then what he is pleased to call
A hardship, was nothing of the kind: the so-called severities
Of fathers are much of a piece: the least strict do not like
To see their sons continually in bad company,
Continually drinking: and so they are sparing in what they allow them;
For such restrictions, remember, promote good morals.
But when a man's mind has once become the slave
Of evil passions, he is driven of necessity from bad to worse.
There's wisdom, Pamphilus, in the saying, *By others' faults*
*Wise men correct their own.*

*Pam.* I think so too.

*Chr.* Very well.
Then I need say no more.

*Pam.* Would not the old man, sir,
Be glad to see him back?

*Chr.* He would be glad to see him
Return from his evil ways to a dutiful course of conduct.
*Pam.* I guess he'd let him marry the girl.
*Chr.* (*aside*). What shall I say?
*Pam.* He would.
*Chr.* Nay, Pamphilus: attend to me. No father
Would ever give in to his son in a matter of this kind.
Learn this lesson: see what shame your friend has brought
On his poor old father. No, 'twould never do to yield.
I can promise you too that he will not. I should not advise it myself.
*Pam.* You don't know Clinia, sir; and have never seen the girl.
You go entirely by what this old Menedemus says.
He never saw her himself.
*Chr.* (*aside*). That's true.—And you have seen her?
*Pam.* I have.
*Chr.* And what is she like?
*Pam.* I never saw anything like her.
*Chr.* Come, what d'ye mean?
*Pam.* I tell you, I know now what she's like—
The statue that stands in the hall: the third on the left.
*Chr.* The Grace?
An elegant taste.

*Pam.* If you were to see her, you'd say the same.

*Chr.* Should I? Then just attend. I wish to help my neighbour.

If all were ready to lend their neighbours a helping hand,
We should not hear the complaints we do against ill fortune.
I am always ready myself; am now: in point of fact
I have promised to do what I can: but since, before I act,
Or even judge, I am willing to know all sides of a case,
'Tis part of my duty to see this girl. Could you procure
That I should speak with her?

*Pam.* (*aside*). This is the very thing we want.
If now I could get him to ask Antiphila here to-day,
Clinia of course would come: I'll try and work it.

*Chr.* Well?
Answer me. Could you do this?

*Pam.* Yes, father.

*Chr.* When?

*Pam.* To-day.

*Chr.* I did not mean to-day.

*Pam.* There's no time like the present.

*Chr.* For inconvenience?

*Pam.* No; for opportunity.

*Chr.* How so?

*Pam.* Invite her here to spend the feast with us,

And bring a friend.

*Chr.* But would she come?

*Pam.* Yes, she would come.

*Chr.* Whom have you asked besides?

*Pam.* Only Philolaches.

*Chr.* It happens, Pamphilus, we are short of guests;
I find
My old friend Phanias has gone from home to-day.
Archonides' wife is ill; they cannot come: and now
Just the last thing Daniel has disappointed me.
The two young ladies would help us out: besides
I am sure
'Twould please your mother to ask them.

*Pam.* I cannot agree with you there.

*Chr.* Allow me to judge of that; and since you
said you were able
To bring them—bring them.

*Pam.* Oh, if you wish it, I'm ready enough;
I'll see they come: but I had forgotten; there is one
more
Besides Philolaches.

*Chr.* Who then? I beg you'll bring
None of your Clinias here.

*Pam.* He that is with me now.

*Chr.* He is it? That's quite another thing:
A gentleman

At first sight, Pamphilus; I wish that all your friends
Were such as he. By all means bring him. Present
him now.
His name?
*Pam.* Clitipho.
*Chr.* (*aside*). I like his appearance much:
When I came up he went respectfully aside—
Excellent manners. (*To Clin.*) Ha, good Clitipho, how
d'ye do?
'Tis time that we were acquainted. I understand my son
Has invited you to our house. There's not much I
can offer,
But *My little pot is soon hot.* I am very glad
And proud to have you my guest.
*Clin.* I thank you, sir; I am sorry—
*Chr.* No thanks, I pray. At present excuse me;
for I must go
And prepare my wife to receive her guests. You're
sure they'll come?
*Pam.* Sure.
*Chr.* And I hope they may. 'Twill make our
numbers up:
We'll have a merry feast.
*Pam.* Ay, sir. . . . . [*Exit Chremes within.*
And so we shall,
Clinia.

*Clin.* What have you done?

*Pam.* Why pretty well, I think.

*Clin.* I did not look for this, nor wish it, and do not like it.

*Pam.* Not like it! Is it not perfect? If all the gods in heaven
Had put their heads together to assist in your affairs,
They could not have done it better than I. My father bids
You and Antiphila both to spend the day; and he,
Charmed with her grace and beauty, will use his influence
To bring your father round.

*Clin.* I would not risk so much
On the fancy of any man: and though I have a hope
Antiphila's charms will plead not vainly, that must be
When she's my wife, not now: and they must urge themselves;
Another cannot paint them.

*Pam.* I do beseech you, Clinia,
Don't leave a friend in the lurch. Hark you; to tell the truth,
My scheme suits me to a T as well as you. My father
Expects Antiphila to bring a companion with her:
Now I have a lady friend, with whom I am circumstanced

Much as you are with yours. My father, just as yours,
Would never hear of my asking her home; but if she comes
To-day as Antiphila's friend, he'll not guess who she is;
So ou may have your love to yourself, & I have mine.
And see, here comes Philolaches, our other guest:
I'll tell him what is arranged: he'll be a strong ally.

*Clin.* Indeed, I can't consent: and who is Philolaches,
That you sh^d^ wish to tell him all my private affairs?

*Pam.* Ah, he can smell a rat; but don't be afraid of him;
He's my sworn friend: & sure no less to keep a secret,
Than he is to find out anything in the mortal world
That you seek to withhold.

*Clin.* I pray, say nothing to him of me.

*Pam.* Trust us; we won't betray you.

(*Runs back to meet Phil.*)

*Clin.* Pamphilus! why he's gone.
Now save me from my friends! Indeed this Pamphilus
Will be my ruin: I wish to heaven I had never met him.
He'll tell his father next, this old Ionian huckster,
Sponge-mongering Chremes; the gods defend me from him,

And his family feast, and his prosy wisdom! I thought
to spend
This day of my return with sweet Antiphila:
And here I am, caught by the ears. And yet my
troublesome friend
Means well: I would not hurt his feelings; but at any
cost
I must get clear, and in one matter I cannot yield:
I will not have Antiphila brought to the judgment-seat
Of this suburban oracle. What has he to do
With me & mine, my father or her—to push his nose
Into our affairs?

*Re-enter Pamphilus with Philolaches.*

*Pam.* Allow me, Clinia, here's my friend
Philolaches, the actor. Philolaches, my friend
Clinia: who is, as I told you, in Persia, you understand.
He looks for some assurance of your discretion.

*PHILOLACHES.*

Sir,
You have it. Take this hand. And by the dog I swear
Not to divulge a tittle; in friendship's secrecy
Rather to aid—

*Clin.* No need, sir: I take the will for the deed.
My business is my own, and not of such a kind
As another can help in.

*Pam.* Oh, but he can.

*Ph.* A family quarrel—
Meddling of course resented. But while your father, sir,
Treats you so ill, expels you his house, denies his ear
To the pitiful plea—

*Clin.* Excuse me again. I do not know
That my father is ill-disposed.

*Ph. (to Pam.).* You told me.

*Pam.* I said he *was*;
But Clinia hopes he may now be changed.

*Ph.* If that's the case, 390
I see that your wish must be, that I sh^d^ discover at once
Your father's temper towards you.

*Clin.* Indeed, sir, I do not wish it.

*Ph.* I die to serve you.

*Clin.* I thank you.

*Ph.* I promise to find it out
In half an hour.

*Clin.* How would you?

*Ph.* I am an actor, sir;
Never so much myself as when I seem another.
Would you employ my talent—

*Clin.* Why, what would you do?

*Ph.* Disguise myself as a Persian, late arrived in Athens:

Go to your father's house & bring him tidings of you.
How the old man took what I should tell him would
teach you all.
Nay, I can promise more; that, if there's left in him
The last wandering spark of affection, I'll blow it to
flame,
And you shall twist him round your thumb.
*Pam.* Bravo!
*Clin.* But, sir,
What tidings would you feign?
*Ph.* That is as I should find him:
If soft, I'd handle him kindly: if hard, I'd say I'd seen
you
Sick of a fever, enslaved, imprisoned, or, if required,
Dead and buried.
*Clin.* And so you would give him needless pain.
*Pam.* That is the question, Clinia; if you were sure
of that,
You would not be hiding.
*Clin.* Nay, but the doubt will not excuse me
In doing the thing, which I still must hope would pain
him most.
*Ph.* What matter, when all the time you are just
behind the hedge?
No reason I see to wound him: I shall feel my way.
An hour will settle all. If he be kindly bent,

Or I can move him towards you, you must stand prepared
To strike while the iron is hot. The lady, I understand,
Will be with you here: be ready, and when I give the word,
You step across the road and kneel for the old man's blessing.

*Clin.* I have told you, Pamphilus, Antiphila must not come.
Your father's interference is most unfortunate:
He is not my judge for good or ill. It shall not be.

*Pam.* I have promised.

*Clin.* I am determined.

*Ph.* A very delicate point.
And yet 'tis a pity they should not come.

*Pam.* O Clinia,
Your obstinacy will ruin all.

*Ph.* (*to Pam.*). I understand.
Your friend objects to the lady coming, because he thinks
Your father will know her?

*Pam.* And so he will.

*Ph.* Nay, not at all.
Chremes need never know her.

*Pam.* How can you manage that?

*Ph.* The thing's as easy as lying. Let the ladies change
Their names; or if so be Chremes knows not their names,
Let them but change their parts. Gorgo—for that's the lady,
Whom you would bring, I guess—let Gorgo pass to-day
For Clinia's mistress; let Antiphila play the maid;
What hinders not that when they come, each take his own.
You have your Gorgo; you, sir, your Antiphila:
And none will be any the wiser.

*Pam.* Good. What say you now?

*Clin.* 'Twould make all kinds of complications, Pamphilus:
And all to no manner of purpose.

*Pam.* Why, I should keep my promise,
And spend the day with Gorgo.

*Clin.* I'll play no part in this.
You quite forget besides that as yet I know not how
Antiphila will receive me. I have been six months away;
She may have thrown me over, may have another lover,
And think of me no more.

*Ph.* Wish you to find out that? I'll serve you too in this. Give me the word to go
And visit her where she lives, and if I find her true,
To bring her along at once.

*Clin.* 'Tis extremely kind of you, sir,
To throw yourself so quickly and hotly into my affairs:
But indeed I do not need it.

*Ph.* 'Tis plain to me you do.
A runaway just returned, afraid to face his father,
Fearful lest in his absence his mistress have proved untrue—
Not need a friend? Why a friend is just what you do need,
To discover fór you the state of affairs, and put you in train.

*Clin.* Though, sir, I were quite content to reckon upo your zeal,
Maybe you overrate your ability.

*Ph.* Not at all.
Unless you will say that by art I am able to counterfeit
Passion in all its br nches, & yet not know the thing
When I see it;—as if a man c[d] write who cannot read.
You think your love for this lady a secret between yourselves—
That she would not reveal it to me, a stranger? How in the world
Could she conceal it? Why, don't you know that a girl in love
Is *A B C* to read? Trust me and let me try.

*Pam.* Clinia, do yield, I pray.

*Clin.* I know not what to do.
I'll yield so far as this: that if Philolaches
Can, as he boasts, discover these two things fór me, first
How my father stands disposed to me now, and next
Whether Antiphila's heart is firm—and this so soon
And easily as he thinks—I would not hinder him.
One stipulation only: let him name what time
Will cover the whole performance; for failing him, I'd like
To take my affairs in hand myself. I'll ask him then,
When does he hope to do this?
*Ph.* Give me an hour apiece.
*Clin.* This afternoon.
*Ph.* Enough: a bargain. 'Tis two hearts
To read—your father and mistress.
*Clin.* And both this afternoon.
*Pam.* And bring the lady if she is true.
*Clin.* I said not that.
*Pam.* Clinia, you must.
*Ph.* Agree to this: I first will go
And visit Antiphila; if she is willing, I bring her here,
And here you may meet. But since she comes as Gorgo's maid,
'Twill be easy for you to withdraw with her, where and when you choose:

I meanwhile will angle your father.

*Clin.* (*to Pam.*). Then thus I assent,

That first, she is not introduced to your father; and secondly,

That I may take her away when I choose.

*Pam.* Agreed.

*Ph.* I'm off.

But first a word with you (*to Pam.*).

*Pam.* (*to Clin.*). O Clinia, I do thank you.

But don't stay out here longer: somebody is sure to see you.

Go into the house.

*Clin.* If you will come with me.

*Pam.* I'll come directly.

*Clin.* I have never met your people. I can't go in by myself.

*Pam.* Why, man alive, there's only my father and mother. Go in. [*Exit Clinia within.*

*Ph.* Your friend has money?

*Pam.* Yes, his father.

*Ph.* If I succeed,

He'll give me something?

*Pam.* Surely. What are you going to do?

*Ph.* I'm going to dress myself up as a Persian—didn't you hear?

To take in old Menedemus.

*Pam.* May I help?

*Ph.* Why, yes,
If you will do as I tell: you shall be Persian in chief,
Swagger and talk the gibberish: I'll be interpreter.
Two are better than one, tho' one be a tup's head.

*Pam.* Menedemus knows me by sight.

*Ph.* Not in a Persian dress.
Come, there's no time to lose. I'll go to the lady first:
What is her name? Antiphila?

*Pam.* Yes.

*Ph.* And where does she live?

*Pam.* I'll come with you down the road, and tell you all as we go.
But let's be off. I fear Clinia may change his mind.

[*Exeunt.*

# ACT · II

*Enter PAMPHILUS.*

*PAMPHILUS.*

WHAT unjust judges fathers all are towards
their children;
Pretending to us as they do that the moment we
cease to be boys
We ought to become thorough old men, without a trace
Of the inclinations natural to our time of life:
Governing us by the rule of their present appetites,
And not by those they have lost. If ever I have a son,
He will find me an easy father, able to understand
His faults, I hope, and ready to make allowance for
them:
Not like mine, suspicious & cross—& he never speaks
But to read me a lecture on somebody else. Why,
bless my soul,
If he has but taken an extra glass or two, the tales
Of his own wickedness he'll come out with! And
then he says,

*By others' faults wise men correct their own.* What wisdom!
He little thinks how deaf an adder he is trying to charm.
At present the words of my mistress touch me nearer far,
When she says, Give me this, or, Bring me that; and I
Have nothing to answer. Nobody could be in a worse plight.
This fellow Clinia here has his hands full, yet his mistress
Is modest & well brought up, too gentle & innocent
To trifle with affection. Mine is a fine lady, exacting,
Vain, fashionable & extravagant; & I lack the means
To please her fancy. This misfortune is new to me—
An experience, which I have only just begun to learn:
And as yet my father guesses nothing of it.

*Enter Clinia.*

*CLINIA.*

If all were well,
They must have been here before: I fear there's something happened,
Or that in my absence she may have become estranged from me.

*Pam.* What now, man?

*Clin.* O, I am most unhappy.

*Pam.* You had best take care,

Or some one coming out of your father's house may see you.

*Clin.* I will; but, Pamphilus, I have a strong presentiment

Of some misfortune, I know not what.

*Pam.* Why, what's the matter?

*Clin.* Were nothing the matter, they certainly would have been here by this.

*Pam.* Nonsense. Doesn't it strike you it's some way off? and then

You know how it is with women, they are always about a year

Putting on their things and getting themselves up.

*Clin.* But only fancy if really she should have forgotten me! 530

Yes,—while like a fool I ran away from home,

And wandered I know not where, fall'n in deep disgrace,

Undutiful to my father, for whom I am now sorry

And ashamed of my conduct towards him;—thou, yes, O thou hast

Deserted me, my Antiphila. What shall I do?

*Pam.* Look, look!

I see them coming.

*Clin.* Where?

*Pam.* Well, here's Philolaches,
Who comes to announce them, (*aside*) and on his shoulders a mighty bale
Of Persian togs.

*Enter Philolaches with a large bundle.*

*Clin.* He has come without them! (*To Phil.*) Tell me, sir,
Do the ladies come?

*PHILOLACHES.*

They follow; I come before,
Because there's not a woman in Athens would walk with me
Carrying such a bundle along the public streets.
I was almost ashamed of myself. (*Sets bundle down.*)

*Clin.* But does she know I am here?

*Ph.* Or else had never come.

*Clin.* You have actually seen her then?

*Ph.* I'll tell you all I saw. The business was, I think,
To discover if she was true?

*Clin.* It was. Indeed I feared—

*Ph.* Then I have discovered it for you.

*Clin.* If you have really done so,
Tell me your news at once.

*Ph.* Attend. When first I came

To the house, I knocked. Out came an old woman
and opened the door;
I struck past her into the room. Of all the ways
Of finding out how she has been living all these
months,
This suddenly breaking in on her was the best: this
gave me
A pretty good guess at her usual way of spending the
time:
There's nothing like it for showing what people
really are.
I came upon her hard at work at her tapestry,
Dressed in a common gown: no gold about her; none
Of the rouge and powder, that women bedaub their
faces with:
She was dressed like those who dress for themselves:
her hair was loose
And pushed back carelessly from her face—
*Clin.* Go on, I pray.
*Ph.* The old woman was spinning the woof: one
servant girl besides
Wove with her, quite in rags, untidy and dirty.
*Pam.* Now,
If this is true, I see you are safe. You would not find
The servant a slattern, where there's a lover.
*Clin.* Pray go on.

*Ph.* When I told her that you were returned, and had sent for her,
She suddenly stopped in her work; the tears ran down her cheeks
In such a way, it was easy to see 'twas for love of you.—
*Clin.* Perdition take me now, if I know where I am for joy.
I was so afraid.
*Pam.* And Gorgo is coming?
*Ph.* Ay, no fear.
But don't forget who's who.
*Pam.* And have you taught the ladies
Their parts?
*Ph.* Antiphila's part is nothing to learn at all;
Except she must not call your friend by his right name:
But Gorgo—
*Pam.* What?
*Ph.* Why she was hard to persuade, but once
Persuaded, I do not fear her. I am more afraid of you;
Don't you forget that she doesn't belong to you, mind!
The slip 573
Of a word might ruin all. And don't make signs.
*Pam.* Trust me.
See here they come.
*Clin.* I see them.
*Ph.* Stay; let us stand aside;

And watch them till they see us.

*Clin.* Why now?

*Ph.* I say, stand back.

(*They retire.*)

*Enter Gorgo and Antiphila.*

GORGO.

Upon my word, my dear Antiphila, I do praise
And envy you too, when I see how all your study has been
To make your mind as charming and sweet as your face. Lord love you!
I'm not surprised at any one wanting to marry you.
I see from what you've said what kind of person you are;
And when I come to think of the sort of life, which you
And people like you, lead, who keep admirers off
At arms'-length, then no wonder, I say, that you sh^d^ be
Just what you are, and others, like me, so different.
Then once your mind made up to share and spend your days
With the man whose disposition is most congenial to you,
He never leaves you more: for mutual benefits
Must bind you so closely, that no misfortune can ever come
To cross your love.

*ANTIPHILA.*

I cannot tell what others do;
But I know I always have wished, and done my best, to find
My happiness in what pleased him.

*Clin.* (*aside*). Ah, my Antiphila,
And that is why I love you, why I am now returned.

*Gor.* Who is that young man who is standing to look at us?

*Ant.* Ah, hold me up!

*Gor.* Why, what in the world's the matter, my dear?

*Ant.* I shall die; I shall die.

*Gor.* Do say, what is it astonishes you?

*Ant.* Is it Clinia I see or not?

*Gor.* See who?

*Clin.* 'Tis I, my dearest.

*Ant.* My long-expected Clinia, it is you.

*Clin.* Are you well?

*Ant.* Oh, I am glad you have come back safe.

*Clin.* Do I hold thee, Antiphila, thou most desired of my heart!

*Ph.* Take care.
Remember. Here comes the old man.

(*Takes up the bundle.*)

*Enter Chremes from his house.*

*CHREMES.*

I thought so; here you are.
I heard your voices. I welcome you all. How very nice!
Now, Pamphilus, pray present me!

*Pam.* (*presenting Gorgo*). This is the lady, sir.
My father, miss.

*Chr.* (*aside*). She is handsomely dressed. (*To Gorgo*)
I am very proud
To make your acquaintance. I hope the day may be
fortunate.
'Twas kind of you now to come.

*Gor.* Why, bless your heart, old man,
I thank ye: but all the same I came to please myself.

*Chr.* (*aside*). My word!

*Pam.* And this is the lady she brings with her.

*Chr.* (*to Antiphila*). Ah, good-day.
You are welcome, welcome all. Again, good Clitipho.
Philolaches, I think. Good-day to you, sir! My word!
What a gigantic bundle!

*Ph.* Ay.

*Chr.* What can it be? 611

*Ph.* The ladies' cloaks and wraps.

*Chr.* Shame to load you thus!
You know the proverb, *The willing horse.* Pray set
them down.
I'll send a servant to take them.

*Ph.* Nay, 'tis the merest trifle.

*Chr.* Why, yes: and I'll call my wife: excuse me, ladies—a moment.

Sostrata, Sostrata! . . . [*Goes into house calling.*

*Pam.* (*to Ph.*). Follow me quick: this way, before my father is back.

[*Exeunt Pam. and Phil. into house at back.*

*Clin.* You know why I am returned?

*Ant.* Nay, you must tell me first
What made you go away.

*Clin.* I could not help it, love;
My father—

*Ant.* O, I know; but is he not kinder now?

*Clin.* Nay, I'm afraid he is not.

*Re-enter Chremes with servant.*

*Chr.* Ladies, my wife's within. 620
She begs you'll enter. Why! & where is Philolaches?
Clitipho, pray go in—no ceremony, sir—
And take this lady with you. I follow.

*Clin.* I thank you, sir.

[*Exeunt Clinia and Antiphila with servant within.*

*Chr.* (*to Gorgo*). With you I beg one word of explanation alone,
Ere we go in—one word—

*Gor.* I wait your pleasure, sir.

*Chr.* I do not wish to seem to meddle in your affairs.

*Gor.* No matter for that.

*Chr.* Believe me, that, if I interfere,
It is for your good.

*Gor.* I know, sir, and thank you very kindly.

*Chr.* I broach the matter at once; my maxim has always been,
*Straight to the business.*

*Gor.* Well, I don't dislike you for that.

*Chr.* Then am I not right in thinking you have never so much as met 631
Old Menedemus?

*Gor.* No.

*Chr.* You have not?

*Gor.* No.

*Chr.* Stay. Perhaps
You don't know who I mean.

*Gor.* He's whatdyecallem's father.

*Chr.* (*aside*). Whatdyecallem! well!—He is Clinia's father; yes.

*Gor.* What of him?

*Chr.* Why 'tis thus. (*aside*) What was I going to say?

*Gor.* Go on, sir.

*Chr.* Ay, the long and the short of the matter is this.
I know your story—let me see—do I know your name?

*Gor.* Gorgo.

*Chr.* Ay, to be sure. Well, Gorgo, I know your story,
But do not charge on you the unhappy consequence
Of a rash attachment. No. Young men will be young men,
And women are—women; no blame to them. But the fact is this:
That being on intimate terms with Clinia's family,
I have been entrusted by them, as one unprejudiced,
To enquire, to judge & advise, and, if I can, to find
A *Modus vivendi*: you, Gorgo, of course are well aware
That your lover, whose absence has had no doubt its effect on you—
That Clinia's running away from home, I say, was due
To his father's disapproval of your attachment: that
Gave rise to disagreement; and Clinia, balancing
'Twixt love & duty, fled from home, & is now abroad,
Madly risking his life in Asia. Why do you laugh?

*Gor.* Indeed, sir, I was not laughing.

*Chr.* The shock this gave his father
Betrayed at last the affection he really bore his son:
It measures too the mischief—shows his purpose too,
And strong determination. He sold his house in town,

Retired from life & pleasure—bought a farm out here,
And works upon it from morning till night like
a common drudge.
There's nothing to laugh at.
*Gor.* Excuse me, sir, I was only thinking
Of something very ridiculous.
*Chr.* Attend. 'Tis you have caused
This quarrel: you have alienated father and son.
Not only that; but it lies with you, and you alone,
That one is risking his life in wild & barbarous wars,
The other is taking leave of his senses as fast as he can.
Think of this happy family life thus broken up,
Which may be never renewed. Suppose that Clinia
Be slain in the wars, and his father brought by grief
to his grave—
Should not this make you serious?
*Gor.* He! he! he!
*Chr.* Your trifling manner, miss,
Causes me much distress.
*Gor.* I am very nervous, sir,
Your solemn way of talking alarms me, and when
alarmed,
I always laugh. He! he! he!
*Chr.* Well, try and contain yourself, I pray.
I asked you here to my house the better to judge of
you.

*Gor.* Ha! ha! ha!

*Chr.* Well, well, I see you are merry. I would not check your mirth,
And yet I cannot see what cause you have to laugh.
Still 'tis a feast with us. I bade you join the feast:
Be merry to-day.

*Gor.* Ha! ha! I will, sir.

*Re-enter Pamphilus and Philolaches.*

*Chr.* (*aside*). By luck, here's Pamphilus—
(*To Gor.*) See, here is my son: go in: I'll speak with you soon again.

*Gor.* What time do you dine?

*Chr.* At five.

*Gor.* Is the bath made hot?

*Chr.* (*aside*). My word!
What a woman!—I'll call my wife to attend you within.

*Gor.* I thank you. I'll take the bath.

(*Going indoors.*)

*Chr.* (*aside to Pam.*). O Pamphilus, Pamphilus,
What have you done? Such a woman as this to dine in my house. [*Exit Chremes with Gorgo.*

*Pam.* By jove, Philolaches; here's a dilemma now:
I never thought of it. 682

*Ph.* What?

*Pam.* Why when, for Clinia's sake,
We changed the ladies, I quite forgot that I had described
Antiphila to my father. Gorgo will never do.
*Ph.* Why not?
*Pam.* Don't ask. What is to be done? What shall I say?
*Ph.* I'm thinking.
*Pam.* My father must never know who Gorgo is.
*Ph.* I see.
*Pam.* What can I tell him?
*Ph.* I'm thinking.
*Pam.* He must not know.
*Ph.* Do let me think.
*Pam.* What is to be done? What can I say?
*Ph.* I have it.
*Pam.* What is it?
*Ph.* If we can do it—
*Pam.* What?
*Ph.* Your father
Must sooner or later come to learn the ladies were changed.
*Pam.* To-morrow that will not matter when Gorgo is out of the way.
To-day we must keep up the deception.
*Ph.* I see you must.

*Pam.* How can I?

*Ph.* What do you say if I can make your father
Give Gorgo fifty pounds for being so much unlike
The lady he thinks her to be?

*Pam.* Impossible.

*Ph.* Nay, 'tis not.

*Pam.* Well, how?

*Ph.* Why, when your father scolds, turn round upon him;
Say you knew all along exactly what he would think,
And brought the lady here in the hope he'd see his way
To helping old Menedemus out of his scrape.

*Pam.* And then?

*Ph.* Tell him to offer Gorgo forty or fifty pounds,
If she will renounce her claim on Clinia.

*Pam.* Fifty pounds! 701
My father give fifty pounds!

*Ph.* Why, don't you wish he would?

*Pam.* And what's the use of wishing?

*Ph.* Try him.

*Pam.* I think you're mad.

*Ph.* Try it; I'll help you out. See here he comes.

*Re-enter Chremes.*

*Chr.* Good heavens!
Pamphilus, here's a sample of manners and good breeding.

How could you ever have thought of bringing that woman here?

*Pam.* You said you wanted to see her: I thought you wished her to come.

*Chr.* When, sir, I blamed your friend, you said I could not judge,

Not having seen the lady. Did I not rightly judge?

*Ph.* (*aside*). Tell him you knew. Don't stand there mum.

*Chr.* I am quite ashamed.

*Pam.* You see then what she is like?

*Chr.* Of course I see too well.

*Pam.* I knew, sir, all along exactly what you would think.

*Ph.* (*aside*). That's right.

*Chr.* And yet you brought her?

*Pam.* You blame me, sir, too soon:

I have put within your reach the very thing you wished.

*Chr.* How so?

*Pam.* I thought you wished to help Menedemus out.

*Chr.* I do.

*Pam.* Why then, 'tis easy.

*Ph.* (*aside*). Bravo!

*Chr.* What do you mean?

*Pam.* Why, sir, we are all agreed the match would never do;

Then why in the world not put a stopper on it at once?

*Chr.* I don't quite see your drift.

*Pam.* Why, forty or fifty pound
Would settle the matter.

*Chr.* How?

*Pam.* Just make the offer and see.

*Chr.* What offer?

*Ph.* O, I see.

*Chr.* I don't see.

*Ph.* Capital!

*Chr.* I'm very dull, no doubt.

*Ph.* If 'twas my place to speak . . .

*Chr.* I don't forbid you, sir.

*Ph.* Then, sir, I praise the scheme.

*Chr.* What scheme?

*Ph.* I'll wager my life he means, this lady here
Has plenty of other lovers; offer her fifty pounds,
If she'll renounce this one.

*Chr.* Why, stuff! suppose she did.
She might be off to-day and on again to-morrow:
Besides, against what Clinia's worth in cash to her,
A fifty pounds is nothing. (*To Pam.*) If that is all you meant,
You're a very clever fellow.

*Ph.* No doubt there's nothing in it,
Unless she set her hand to paper.

*Chr.* Would that bind?
How can you think it?
*Ph.* It might not be binding perhaps on her;
And yet 'twould do the business. If it did not shock
Clinia's love, as it must, 'twould kill his last pretence.
How could he face his father armed with such a paper?
If you will help this old Menedemus, that's the way—
*Chr.* I'll tell Menedemus of this.
*Pam.* If you would help him, father,
Spare him the pain. No doubt he'd give you back the money.
*Chr.* I believe you there. I'd give six times the sum myself,
Were I in his place.
*Ph.* I've half a mind, if you are afraid, 740
To do it myself.
*Chr.* I should not fear to advance the money.
*Ph.* A poor man might, but you, sir . . .
*Chr.* I do not grudge the money.
*Ph.* A gentleman can't consider his pocket at every turn.
*Pam.* I'm sure you can't.
*Chr.* Do you think that forty pounds would do it?
*Ph.* Forty or fifty.
*Chr.* Thirty?
*Pam.* Do it handsomely.

You say you'd give six times the sum yourself.
*Chr.* I would.
Ay, Pamphilus, fifty times.
*Ph.* Then don't think twice about it.
*Chr.* I do think twice. (*Goes aside.*)
*Ph.* Will he do it or not?
*Pam.* My lucky coin.
*Ph.* Watch him.
*Pam.* Heads he does, & tails he doesn't. Heads!
He does.
*Ph.* And he will. Look at him.
*Chr.* (*aside.*) Fifty pounds! A risk.
No chance of profit; no: nor marketable return.
Yet might it save a thousand. Well saved, is like well spent;
Ay, even though 'tis saved for another: besides I am sure
The money is safe enough. And now I have gone so far
To help Menedemus, I can't draw back; while if I do it
I certainly win his esteem & thanks. 'Tis very true
That a good turn done to a neighbour is done to oneself: one lives
Within the circle of joy one goes to create! 'Tis wise:

And then to have Menedemus my friend! Say forty pounds;
I happen to have it handy. I'll do it. It shan't be said,
Chremes is not a gentleman. No, I'll do it.
*Pam.* Sir,
Have you decided?
*Chr.* I have.
*Ph.* You'll do it?
*Chr.* I shall.
*Ph.* Bravo!
Will you give us the money now?
*Chr.* You, sir!
*Ph.* I mean to your son;
To arrange with the lady.
*Chr.* How so? You seem in a vast hurry.
I manage my own affairs. Besides the forty pounds
Is only a guess. I hope to win the lady for less.
Perhaps you thought that if I gave you the round sum,
I should not enquire for the balance, and you might manage to save
A little commission. No: I manage my own affairs.
You can't take Chremes in as easily as all that. [*Exit.*
*Ph.* Ho! ho! ho! ho! What say you!
*Pam.* You are a genius.
*Ph.* Well!

You wanted a present for Gorgo, you told me. Won't this do?

*Pam.* Oh yes! But I am amazed.

*Ph.* Come, let's go in and dress.
I hope to bleed Menedemus to better purpose than this.
For after all we shan't see much of this forty pound;
And as far as I am concerned it's money thrown away.

[*Exeunt.*

# ACT · III

*Enter CHREMES.*

*CHREMES.*

I NEVER saw such a woman; never in all my life.
Upon my word I am sorry for poor Menedemus now:
What would he have done without me? What a predicament!
Suppose his son had returned, and he with his simple heart
Had given in, and had this woman to live in his house—
Well, thanks to me he is safe. Forty pounds, I think,
Was not so dear a bargain: and yet 'tis a tidy sum,
As much as I should make on a small consignment of sponges:
And that I have paid on risk—although I cannot doubt
But that Menedemus will gladly pay me again—'tis risked.
All for this paper, wherein the lady promises
In consideration of this same money made over to her,

Never again to receive the addresses of her quondam lover,
Clinia; signed Gorgo: a genuine business.
And yet no wonder she laughed; of course she thinks me a fool
To consider her promise of weight. Ah, mistress, giggle and all,
I've settled your hash. Ha! ha! 'twas clever of Pamphilus:
The lad has some of my wits. But still I shall be uneasy,
Until I find Menedemus is reasonable:—indeed
I'll lose no time. Menedemus might desire to come
And judge for himself: I'll press him to do so: 'twere best, and then
He'll dine with us after all, & I shall dine much better
Myself, I must confess, when I know my money is safe. [*Exit into Menedemus' garden.*

*Enter Philolaches and Pamphilus disguised as Persians.*

*PHILOLACHES.*

Now don't you think we are unmistakable Persians, eh?

*PAMPHILUS.*

The essence of Central Asia: I shouldn't fear to meet
The shade of Themistocles.

*Ph.* Indeed, I'll bet my life
Your mother would never know you. Is it not a miracle
What these wide snowy trousers & black beards will do?
*Pam.* I like the hat.
*Ph.* Is it comfortable?
*Pam.* It fits like fun.
Have you your tale by heart?
*Ph.* I shan't go wrong in that.
You must speak mock high-Persian; as interpreter
I will make sense of nonsense. Be grave too.
*Pam.* If I laugh, 808
I've got a pretty good sleeve to laugh in. Let us go.
But stay—which gate sh^d good true Persians enter by?
In at the garden gate, or round the house to the front?
*Ph.* Suppose we try the garden. Isn't this the garden?
*Pam.* Yes.
*Ph.* I'll lead. You know the way too well.
[*They go to the garden gate and there meet Chremes re-entering.*
*Pam.* Gods, here's my father!
*Chr.* (*aside*). Why, who in the name of wonder are these queer foreigners?
*Ph.* LIERTOS TULVO.
*Chr.* Sir, I do not understand you.
*Pam.* (*to Phil. aside*). Tell him we want Menedemus, and get him out of the way.

—MEFARIM BURNE SIN MENEDEMUS RYNEAS.

*Ph.* The prince salutes my lord, and asks if here in the earth
Are the thresholds of lord Menedemus.

*Chr.* Ah, you speak our tongue.
'Tis well. This is his house. What would you with him?

*Pam.* (*to Phil.*). Heavens!
What will you say?

*Ph.* Go on.

*Pam.* APROYSI THULNEAR. 821

KEKACHYLOS RATULIAN DRICHO BRESNION OIN.

*Ph.* My lord has bid me say we are Persians, sir, arrived
With tidings to lord Menedemus.

*Chr.* (*aside*). Ah! I guessed as much.
This should be news of Clinia: bad news too, I think.
Their Asiatic gravity cannot quite conceal
A strange anxiety. If he's dead, my money is lost,
My forty pounds all gone. I'll learn the truth at once—
The news, sir, that ye bring, concerns it the old man's son?

*Ph.* (*aside*). We're in for it.

*Pam.* (*aside*). Put him off. Say we bear secret tidings.— 830

NUSPIOL ONAYRMICO.

*Ph.* My lord, sir, will not speak

But only with lord Menedemus.

*Chr.* (*aside*). That's unfortunate.

How shall I find it out? Menedemus is gone from home:

I'm sure he'd wish them to tell me; and 'twould be kindness' self

Gently to break the news to the poor old man. Suppose

I say that I'm Menedemus. I'm sure that scowling fellow

Would drive him out of his wits with fright. Ay, so I'll do.—

Sir, tell your master that I'm Menedemus.

*Pam.* (*to Phil.*). Ho; the deuce!

What's to be done?

*Ph.* (*to Pam.*). The old liar. It's all the same in the end.

He'll tell Menedemus for us. Go on.

*Pam.* VEQUAMIEL 840

SAREPO MANEAS, CAMERUSYN NÁSLONON.

*Ph.* I am bid to tell thee, sir, the news is of thy son.

*Chr.* Is't bad news?

*Ph.* Very bad.

*Chr.* Alas!

*Pam.* (*aside*). Now must my father

Act for himself. He'll not discover me.

*Chr.* I pray,

Tell me the worst. I am not entirely unprepared.
Conceal nothing.

*Pam.* Bios emelto ormimos
Nasephon feldido bo Chrysnotaparoys.

*Ph.* Clinia, thy son, was slain in battle by the prince Nasephon on the plains of Chrysnotaparoys.

*Chr.* (*aside*). My money is paid for nothing: how very provoking! But now
I must not forget the part I am playing. I must affect In some degree the sorrow which Menedemus would feel.—
Alas, my dear son, ah, alas, my dear son, slain,
Slain dead upon the plains of . . .

*Pam.* Chrysnotaparoys.

*Chr.* Of Chrysnotaparoys. Alas! how was he slain?

*Ph.* My master now will tell.

*Pam.* Hastoripeson non.

*Ph.* They pierced him through with spears.

*Pam.* Bo naslon tyvamo.

*Chr.* What's that?

*Ph.* They cut off his head.

*Pam.* Vem dreschim pailekin.

*Ph.* They tore him limb from limb.

*Chr.* Alas, my son! no hope.—
(*Aside.*) I don't know what to say.—Barbarian beasts!

*Ph.* Oh, sir!

Wreak not thy wrath on us, the unwilling messengers
Of mournful tidings.

*Chr.* Pray don't take me now for a fool:
I perfectly understand, that my obligation to you
Is as great as if the news you brought was good. Go on.
Pardon the hasty expression that burst from me in my woe.
If yet there is more, don't scruple to tell it.

*Ph.* We thank thee.

*Pam.* CATROS
USCORINO FRICOSAN NON.

*Ph.* They flayed him alive.

*Pam.* (*aside to Phil.*). You've killed him twice.

*Chr.* O horror!

*Ph.* (*aside to Pam.*). Give me a long one now.—

*Pam.* PERMASON CRALTI ABRITHEOS NASOLION,
ILNO SYNORPIN MUDI.

*Ph.* Ere he died, thy son
Sent thee a message, sir. There lives in the town hard by
A poor old widow woman from Corinth . . .

*Chr.* I know. Her daughter
My son fell madly in love with, was even on the point to marry.
'Twould never have done: she was not at all the sort of woman.

Tell me, sirs, when you came.
*Ph.* Our ship arrived this morning;
And since we sail to-night, 'twill save thee needless trouble
To make thy gift to the prince my master here at once,
According to Persian custom.
*Chr.* Ask you for money, sir?
*Ph.* That is the Persian custom.
*Chr.* (*aside*). Most annoying this!—
Sir, I will send it you.
*Ph.* We would not trouble thee:
We'll wait, sir, while thou fetchest it.
*Chr.* (*aside*). What in the world to do?
These Persians have an uncommon sharp eye to the main chance:
I'll try one piece of gold if 'twill content him.—Sir,
Give this then to your master.
*Ph.* It will not satisfy him.
For he is a potentate: but I will obey thee, sir.
*Pam.* TARTYS CHRIBOS! (*Puts hand on sword.*)
*Ph.* See, sir, he doth not like it.
*Chr.* Well,
I am but a poor man, but what is right I'll do.
Look! here are four more pieces, and that is all I have.
And pray consider, sirs, the mournful news you bring

Cannot be held of value, as joyful tidings might.
(*Gives.*)
(*Aside.*) I hope this may content them: 'tis not much.
Menedemus
Will after all be spared the expense of a funeral.
*Pam.* JOPISCO MORCA.
*Ph.* Sir, he is still but ill contented.
*Chr.* Then wait, sirs. I'll go in and fetch you what I may.
*Ph.* We will await thee here.
*Chr.* (*aside*). I'll go and find Menedemus. [*Exit.*
*Ph.* Now let's be off at once.
*Pam.* What sport! O gods! five pounds!
He never made me so handsome a present in all my life.
I've tried all kinds of dodges to screw coin out of him,
But I never could: and you've come round him twice to-day.
I'll arrange with you for some more adventures of this sort.
*Ph.* Stay,
Half this is mine.
*Pam.* And welcome.

*Enter Menedemus at back unperceived: he watches them.*

*Ph.* What made your governor
Tell all those lies?

*Pam.* Just like him.

*Ph.* Why should he pretend
To be Menedemus?

*Pam.* Merely to meddle: besides no doubt
He was anxious about the money we cheated him of this morning;
He wishes now he was off his bargain with Gorgo.

*Ph.* Ay.
He gave you a blessing this morning.

*Pam.* May the gods bless him.
I love him at this moment.

*Ph.* Come, we must be gone.

*Pam.* Hercules! there is old Menedemus himself. Make haste!
I hope he has not overheard us.

*Ph.* March by in good style.

*Pam.* CHRYSNOTAPAROYS.

*Ph.* Bo CHRYSNOTAPAROYS.

*MENEDEMUS.*

*Chrysnotaparoys!* Whatever jargon is this? 910
Queer-looking fellows too to be prowling about my house,
And talking of me. Some maskers my neighbour Chremes hires

To honour the Feast of Bacchus. A stupid, vulgar fashion,
This orientalising, in great vogue too, and still
Gains ground, I fear; and this is one of the gaudy-days.
'Tis well I did not accept his invitation to dine.
Mummery and tomfoolery! Alas, I have been all day
More nervous and anxious than ever. I even thought this morning
I heard my poor son's voice: so certain I was that I ran
To the end of the garden and looked.—Surely I was either born
With a mind most singularly sensible of grief, or else
The saying is not true that time is sorrow's cure.
My sorrow rather increases upon me every day,
And the longer he is away the more do I yearn for him,
And miss him.

*Re-enter Chremes from Menedemus' house.*

*Chr.* (*aside*). Why here he is, just when I'd given him up.—
O Menedemus!
*Men.* What is the matter?
*Chr.* Alas, Menedemus!
*Men.* You frighten me, Chremes.
*Chr.* I've sought you everywhere.
*Men.* I had to go in the town. Is anything wrong?

*Chr.* I came
To tell you how I had done you a service; light of heart,
Because I had done you a service, knew you must approve,
And did not doubt that you would repay me a little sum
That I ventured on your behalf.
*Men.* Certainly, Chremes; well?
*Chr.* I knew you would, but still I came to explain at once.
I sought for you in your garden in vain; and coming out,
Intending to go to your house, just as I opened the gate,
Just here, I met two foreigners strangely dressed.
*Men.* In white?
*Chr.* You saw them?
*Men.* A moment ago. Who are they?
*Chr.* The elder one
Addressed me in Persian.
*Men.* In Persian, did he? What did he say?
*Chr.* I'll tell you. When they saw me at your gate, coming out,
They thought most naturally that I was you.
*Men.* I see.
*Chr.* I did not undeceive them.
*Men.* They thought that you were me?

*Chr.* They did.

*Men.* I have little doubt but that they are revellers,
Who knowing what you, Chremes, would call my folly, came
To play some practical joke. They said they were Persians?

*Chr.* Yes.

*Men.* With news of Clinia?

*Chr.* Yes.

*Men.* This sort of impertinence
Provokes me, Chremes; 'tis want of respect. Suppose I am
Somewhat old-fashioned, yet to be idly trifled with,
In a matter in which I feel so deeply . . .

*Chr.* Pray heaven you are right.
I did suspect them myself at first: but when they spoke . . .

*Men.* What did they say?

*Chr.* I dare not tell you.

*Men.* You need not fear.

*Chr.* They said your son was dead. They saw him killed by a prince,
In a battle at Chrysno . . . Chrysno . . .

*Men.* Chrysnotaparoys?

*Chr.* Ha! is it a famous place?

*Men.* I never heard of it, Chremes.

*Chr.* Then how did you know?

*Men.* They were talking together as I came in.

*Chr.* That should convince you, and then the dying message he sent.

*Men.* What's that?

*Chr.* The tale you know. The old Corinthian widow,

Whose daughter he was in love with . . .

*Men.* Did they say, may I ask,

All this in Persian?

*Chr.* One did: yes—but I confess,

That in spite of a few expressions I was able to understand,

I had to trust very much to the one that interpreted.

*Men.* But him I should understand?

*Chr.* I don't say but what you might.

*Men.* It's forty years since I was in Persia: but this I know,

That is not a Persian dress, and I think I ought to remember

At least the sound of the language. If you could find these men

And send them to me . . .

*Chr.* I will. They promised to wait for me.

They're not far off: I'll fetch them at once.

*Men.* Stay! ere you go—

I wanted to tell you, Chremes, I have quite made up my mind
Concerning the girl: my duty is plain enough.
*Chr.* What is it?
*Men.* To adopt her: for if my son returns, to find her here
Under my care, protected & loved as I shall love her,
Will be a bond between us to make him forget the past,
My harshness and all; while should he be killed or die abroad,—
Which God forbid—or never return, I have then no heir,
And the only consolation remaining to me in the world
Is the loving her, whom he would have made my daughter, and whom
I shall love like him.
*Chr.* You won't.
*Men.* Why not?
*Chr.* I shall convince you
That you will do nothing of the sort.
*Men.* Why not?
*Chr.* You wouldn't ask,
If you only knew what a creature she is.
*Men.* You know her?

*Chr.* Ay.
*Men.* But how? You never told me.
*Chr.* She is spending the day at my house.
'Twas this I was coming to tell you about, but the other matter
Had driven it out of my head. I thought to discover for you
(Seeing you did not know) what kind of person she was;
That I might judge and tell you, whether you most were wrong
In being at first so harsh to your son, or now to yourself.
So I asked her to spend the day at my house. It has ended in this,
That when I saw what kind of woman she really was,
I offered her forty pounds if she would renounce your son.
Believe me, she jumped at the bargain; so then, to prevent mistake,
I made her sign a paper to that effect. I hold it.
It cost me forty pounds; and that's the money I said,
That I had advanced for you.
*Men.* 'Twas very kind of you, Chremes.
You see I am shocked.
*Chr.* Nay, don't give way.

*Men.* You have dashed my hope.
I was not prepared for this. Freeborn I knew she was not;
But this I never suspected.
*Chr.* Come to my house and see.
I wish you to judge for yourself.
*Men.* She is there?
*Chr.* She is there, do you ask?
Ay, to my cost she is there. No sooner she comes to the door,
Than all is to be topsy-turvy. She calls me 'old man!'
Asks if the bath is ready, and presently calls for wine.
She'll take a 'whetting brusher,' she says. The quantity
She wasted in merely tasting was more than most men drink.
She kept me an hour on my legs before she was pleased, and then
Drank like a fish, & laughed at nothing & everything.
Had it not been for you, Menedemus, I promise you
I could not have stood it.
*Men.* I feel extremely obliged to you,
And sorry for this. You have been most friendly in all you have done.
I cannot doubt you are right. But still whatever she is,

I'd like to see her once. I can't dine with you;—
arrange
To send her across to me. Explain to her who
I am;
And let me judge for myself if it is so impossible
To carry out my former intention as you believe.
*Chr.* By all means. I shall be glad enough to be
rid of her.
I go at once.
*Men.* And find those Persians, whoever they are.
*Chr.* Indeed I must. For either I was grossly de-
ceived
In a manner I cannot believe—I gave them money
too—
Or else—
*Men.* Well, lose no time, I pray: I am less at ease
In the matter now, than when you told me first.
*Chr.* Indeed
I fear you have cause: I'll go at once. Farewell.
[*Exit.*
*Men.* Farewell.
A silly hoax no doubt. I wish 'twere half as likely
That Chremes was wrong about the girl. 'Tis very
strange
That he should suddenly take such an active interest
In my affairs. I think he's a little meddlesome,

With all his kindness and thought. But that's the way of the world. [*Exit.*

*Re-enter Chremes and Pamphilus.*

*Chr.* See Gorgo at once, I say, and get it back if you can.

*Pam.* Why, father?

*Chr.* I'll tell you. Clinia your friend is dead.

*Pam.* Impossible.

*Chr.* No. I have seen two Persians just arrived,
Who say he was slain in battle.

*Pam.* Does old Menedemus know?

*Chr.* He does.

*Pam.* And how does he take it?

*Chr.* Why? How should he take it?

*Pam.* How should I know? The cross old hunks.

*Chr.* Stop! Pamphilus.
You wrong him; he's distracted: and now in consequence,
He has made up his mind to adopt that woman.

*Pam.* Gorgo?

*Chr.* Yes.
How can you laugh?

*Pam.* Well, if he adopts her, what's the use
Of asking her for the money now? Menedemus will pay.

*Chr.* You do, please, as I say. Of course it's impossible
To adopt her: I intimated to him as much, but still
He wants to judge for himself. I promised to send her tó him.
As soon as the ladies return from the bath explain this tó her,
And take her across; at least if I'm not back from town.
*Pam.* You go to the town?
*Chr.* I have promised to bring these Persians back;
We wish to establish the news they brought. They half engaged
To await me here, but it seems they are gone.
*Pam.* Can I go fór you?
*Chr.* Ay, ay. Yet no. (*aside*) Nay, I shall have to explain to them
That I am not Menedemus,—I fear I must go myself.
I think I shall not be long. You do as I told you, please;
And tell your mother where I am gone.
*Pam.* I hope you'll find them.
*Chr.* I shan't come back without 'em. [*Exit.*
*Pam.* (*aside*). Good-bye then, dad, for ever!

# ACT · IV

*PAMPHILUS and CLINIA.*

*PAMPHILUS.*

'TIS simply ruin, Clinia; pray come back at once.
Do wait till after dinner.

*CLINIA.*

I couldn't.

*Pam.* The governor
Will smoke it all if you go: 'twill break our party up.

*Clin.* My father thinks I am killed.

*Pam.* What matter so you're not?

*Clin.* He'll be so grieved. Indeed I can't consider
your party.

*Pam.* You're most ungrateful.

*Clin.* Nay indeed, good Pamphilus,
I am much obliged for all your kindness; I say so
again.
But this I told you expressly I did not wish.

*Pam.* You've got
More than you ever hoped. Antiphila here: your
father

Brought nicely round: and all through my good management.
And now you'll throw me over for want of a little patience.
*Clin.* To be free with you, I do not like being half drawn in, as I am,
To tricking your father of fifty pounds. Besides I am here
Under a false name, as his guest. Antiphila too
Is passing off for somebody else, I know not who;
While you and Philolaches have deceived your father and mine,
In a way that I cannot be party to.
*Pam.* Wait. Here comes my father.
I'll show you now what kind of a temper I risk for you.

*Enter Chremes from town.*

*CHREMES.*

Wheu! back at last. Wheu, wheu! my word! as hot as hot!
Wheu! bah! and all this worry and flurry for nothing: wheu!
I am covered and choked with dust. I wish most heartily
These Persians had found their grave at Chrysnotaparoys.

I vow that the famous army of Darius never gave
Such trouble to brave Miltiades at Marathon,
As these two rascally slinkers have given to me.
Wheu! Wheu!
*Pam.* (*advancing*). Have you not found them, father?
*Chr.* If I have found them? No.
I went to the port; the ship I found there sure enough,
But I could not hear of them. A single passenger,
They said, had landed; and he was a Greek. I enquired besides
At all the houses along the road: there was not a man,
Who had even so much as seen them.
*Sostrata* (*within*). Chremes! Chremes!
*Chr.* Ah!

*Enter Sostrata from Chremes' house.*

*SOSTRATA.*

O husband! husband!
*Chr.* O wife! wife!
*Sost.* She is found, she is found!
*Chr.* Who's found?
*Sost.* Our daughter, our long-lost daughter is found.
*Chr.* What now?
*Sost.* Look! this is the necklace, this the ring.
*Chr.* Why, what d'ye mean?

*Sost.* See, husband, if you remember them; they are the very same
Our daughter Antiphila wore, the day she was stolen.
*Chr.* Hey!
What's this?
*Sost.* I knew them at once.
*Chr.* Then tell me at once, whén,
How, and where did you find them?
*Sost.* The girl that Gorgo brought
Wore them. I knew them at once: and when I heard her name....
*Chr.* Antiphila?
*Sost.* Yes, Antiphila.
*Chr.* Quite so. You heard the name;
That made you think this girl our daughter: I'll wager my life
She's no such thing. 'Tis unsupposable.
*Sost.* Dearest husband,
I always knew we should find her. I've said so a thousand times.
*Chr.* Oh yes! you always knew beforehand of everything
After it happened, wife: there's nothing could occur
But you would tell me you told me before. And yet this time

Do not be wise too soon.

*Sost.* Why, here's the ring itself,
The necklace and the name.

*Chr.* The name is a common name,
And rings and necklaces too are made so much alike,
They're nothing to go by.

*Sost.* Then I have spoken to her, Chremes,
And she is so like her :—

*Chr.* Hey! here's fine proof indeed;
Just think for once now what you have said. You recognize
In a grown-up lady, you say, the baby you have never seen
Since she was three! Why, even supposing she was not changed
In all these fifteen years, could you remember her
So long?

*Sost.* But she is my daughter: that makes the difference.

*Chr.* Why, that's the very question. Is she? And if she was,
What difference could it make? But if you have spoken with her,
Where does she say she comes from?

*Sost.* She says she lives in the town
With an old Corinthian widow . . .

*Chr.* I know: the mother of Gorgo.
They live together, do they? Then just send Gorgo here.
*Sost.* Indeed she has nothing to do with Gorgo.
*Chr.* According to that
There are two Corinthian widows.
*Sost.* Two?
*Chr.* Why not? I suppose
There must be two, unless it's the same.
*Sost.* But who is the other?
*Chr.* There isn't another at all. Bring Gorgo here at once.
She'll know enough of the facts to set this matter at rest.
*Sost.* Why, Chremes . . .
*Chr.* I say, fetch Gorgo.
*Sost.* I assure you, Chremes dear . . .
*Chr.* Do go and fetch her, wife.
*Sost.* Well, as you will. . . .
*Chr.* Of course.
Dó I ever express an opinion, issue a command,
Without an ample reason? (*Exit Sostrata.*)
'Twould be strange!—(*To Pam.*) Now, sir,
Had you not heard of this?
*Pam.* No, father.
*Chr.* And there you stand,

As dull as a fish! Why, what will you think, if this
be true,
Of finding a sister?
*Pam.* Sir, you wished me a happy day:
As nothing was more unlooked for, nothing is happier
In the world than this.
*Chr.* Yet there's your friend, a perfect stranger,
Is far more moved than you. You go to the play, I
know:
Fifty per cent. of all our Attic comedies
Have this same plot, a daughter stolen in early years,
Lost sight of, despaired of, almost forgotten, and then
at last,
When least expected—although there's scarce a soul
in the house
That does not know or guess it beforehand—she re-
appears.
Then are not all eyes wet? Why, that's the poetic art,
Which makes emotion, and sells it to fools at market
price.
You have pitied the child, have pictured the thousand
possible ills
She may have encountered, hardships of body and
mind, neglect,
The injuries and privations of slavery, wrongs and
blows;

The lack of all that care, to which, in a mother's love,
The meanest birth is titled, without which even brutes
Perish for lack of instinct: the tenderness of sex
You have thought of; her innocence, the snares of a merciless world
For the unprotected, and then this picture you contrast
With the comfortable, gentéel hóme the scene presents.
You feel for the parents then—ay, tho' some ridicule
Be fastened upon them; 'tis by such touches of flesh and blood
The life comes home to your heart, and while you are made to smile,
You weep. You have paid for the tear, or if your false shame
Forbids you to shew your feeling, you've bought a lump in the throat.
You praise the play, because 'tis a tender situation,
Enough to stir the blood of a crocodile like yourself:
I catch you weeping—slap! all's changed. 'Tis not a play:
The stage is yóur hóme, the actors your father and mother,
Your own sister is found, & where's your feeling now?
I think your heart is made of matting! Your friend, I say,
Is far more moved: I see the tears stand in his eyes.

*Clin.* 'Tis joy. I wish you joy, sir. I wish your daughter joy.

And, may I say it, your happiness brings happiness to me.

*Chr.* I thank you, Clitipho; but now we go too fast: Because I don't at all suppose this is my daughter. Ho! Gorgo! where's Gorgo? (*Goes to door.*)

*Clin.* (*to Pam.*). O Pamphilus, I am in heaven: For if Antiphila really be your sister, then My father cannot oppose our marriage.

*Pam.* No more will mine. 'Twill make him as proud as a peacock.

*Clin.* Sweetest Antiphila.

*Pam.* Quite so: but what in the world do you think will happen to me, When he finds out?

*Clin.* Oh, I have attained the life of the gods!

*Pam.* Go on. You will not tell me now I have done too much?

*Clin.* Oh no: I forgive it all.

*Pam.* Forgive it?

*Clin.* I thank you for it.

*Pam.* I shall need more than thanks.

*Clin.* O Pamphilus, anything. What can I give you?

*Pam.* Listen. If things go well with you,

They're not so smart with me: and if you wish to help me,
I only see one hope.
*Clin.* What's that?
*Pam.* That you should win
Your father to plead for me: after all I have done for him,
I think he might: and if you ask him, I am sure he will.
Concealment is out of the question: go to him now at once,
And tell him all.
*Clin.* Indeed I was going; but may I not see Antiphila first?
*Pam.* No, no, there's not a moment to lose.
The governor will be back, and if he finds you out,
You'll have to go to your father with him, and what a tale
He'll tell it's easy to guess.
*Clin.* I would not consent to that.
I'll go at once.
*Pam.* Go quickly, before Gorgo comes.
Quick! Quick! [*Exit Clinia.*
And just in time. I wonder what she will say.
*Chr.* (*at the door to Gorgo*). I want you a moment, Gorgo.

*Enter Gorgo with Sostrata.*

Prithee, be so good
As just to answer my questions. This girl Antiphila
Who came with you, is your maid? Don't look at
my son and laugh.
I am serious. Is this girl your servant?

*GORGO.*

No.

*Chr.* She is not?
She lives with you?

*Gor.* No.

*Chr.* I thought you lived with the widow woman,
Who came from Corinth. Pray be sober. I want to
know.
You told me you did.

*Gor.* Ay, sir.

*Chr.* And yet Antiphila
Does not live with you?

*Gor.* No, sir.

*Chr.* When did you see her first?

*Gor.* This morning.

*Chr.* Indeed. And can you tell me nothing
about her?

*Gor.* Nothing whatever.

*Chr.* I thank you. I've nothing to ask you then.

*Gor.* It's thank you for nothing, sir! No further commands at present?

*Chr.* Peace, prithee, peace!

(*To Sostrata.*) Now, wife, you see I was right for once.
Gorgo knows nothing about her.

*Sost.* I told you she didn't, Chremes.

*Chr.* But then you said she lived with the widow.
You see she doesn't,
And Gorgo does.

*Sost.* I can't believe it. Antiphila told me
The widow's name; and then the very clothes she wore
The day she was stolen, she has laid by.

*Chr.* Eh! said she so?
Then you should have sent for the woman, told her to bring the clothes.

*Sost.* So, Chremes, I did, but the poor old lady's too ill to come:
But the clothes were sent. I have seen them.

*Chr.* And are they the same?

*Sost.* They are.

*Chr.* Why then did you not spare me all this trouble, wife?
Why did you not tell me before of the clothes?

*Sost.* You would not hear!

*Chr.* Not hear! when all the time I was asking you this and that.

Ye gods! have ye never made one reasonable woman?
Don't you see that the clothes are the chiefest matter
of all?
Why, they're a proof.
*Sost.* Then do you believe?
*Chr.* Ay, wife, come in.
I think we have found our daughter.
*Gor.* Oho! ho! ho! [*Exeunt Sost. and Chr.*
O he does make me laugh.
And when he finds all out, the silly old man, at last,
How I shall love to see him!
*Pam.* Indeed you must not stay.
*Gor.* Why not?
*Pam.* Why, don't you see how mad he'll be?
*Gor.* He will.
*Pam.* He'll want that forty pounds.
*Gor.* He may want.
*Pam.* I am afraid
You cannot keep it.
*Gor.* I not keep it? What! d'ye think
I'd give it him back?
*Pam.* I think you had better make sure of it.
Take my advice and go.
*Gor.* I am sorry to go, and yet
What should I stay for now? There'll be no dinner.
*Pam.* No,

That there won't.

*Gor.* Well, make my excuses, & give your father
My kind congratulations.

*Pam.* Go!

*Gor.* With the same to you.
Antiphila's quite a dove.

*Pam.* Do go!

*Gor.* Good-bye, my lad.
It's wisest to go, I see: but if the old man should ask
Where I am gone to . . .

*Pam.* Well?

*Gor.* Why, tell him I'm gone to spend
His forty pounds in the town. Ta ta! [*Exit.*

*Pam.* I think that woman
Has done for me. Thank the gods she's gone, and just in time;
Here somebody comes from the house.

*Enter Philolaches from Chremes' house.*

*PHILOLACHES.*

Look out, Pamphilus!
Your father is coming after you.

*Pam.* He has found us out of course?

*Ph.* He has guessed who Gorgo is; but still is quite in the dark.
He still imagines Clinia slain and torn to bits

On the plains of what d'ye call it.—

*Pam.* What is best to do?

*Ph.* Nothing. Let him rave it out. The quicker he heats,

The quicker he'll cool.

*Pam.* But if you had ever seen him angry . . .

*Ph.* Don't be afraid.

*Pam.* I am.

*Ph.* Throw all the blame on me.

*Pam.* I hear him.

*Re-enter Chremes, speaking as he comes out to Sostrata within.*

*Chr.* It's high time, wife, you stopped this precious noise,

Deafening the gods with singing all your confounded praises

For finding your daughter. You judge them by yourself perhaps,

And think they can't understand a simple thing, unless

It's told them a hundred times.

(*To Pam.*) Now, sir, 'tis you I want.

Come here.

*Pam.* What, father?

*Chr.* *What, father?* As innocent

As milk, no doubt. You think it's possible I do not know?
I'll tell you what: to-day I have found a daughter, sir,
And lost a son. Begone and take your Gorgo with you:
For I'll not own you longer. Be off! Go where you will:
But see you ne'er set foot beneath my roof again.
*Pam.* Father, what do you mean? What have I done?
*Chr.* You dare
Ask! If I tell you now that you are a reprobate,
An idle, dissipated, licentious, spendthrift fellow:—
Is that enough?
*Pam.* O father!
*Chr.* Or if I add the rest, 1240
A mean, deceitful, undutiful, snivelling, sneaking cheat;
A liar.
*Pam.* Oh, I am not.
*Chr.* Well, you deny it, do you?
I'll ask you is this true or not. You found that I,
With a view to help our neighbour, wished to see the girl
That got his son into trouble. You undertook to bring her.

I trusted you wholly, could not expect to be played
on bý you;
You knew her, and I did not, had never heard her
name;
And this you knew, and took occasion to introduce
A different person altogether, a friend of your own,
A woman whose very presence was an insult; and
not content
With abusing my confidence & kindness, my sheer
disgust
You turned to your own account, and so, on a
mock pretence
Of doing my neighbour a wonderful service, made
me pay
I don't know what. You blinded me, and robbed me,
and all the while
'Twas yóur víle místress I was entertaining for you,
And paying out of my pocket for nothing. Is that
not true?
Was it not enough to have this creature sit down
to dine
With your mother and me? ay, and with your sister?
and as for her,
Yóu have been the means of aspersing her character,
The day when she is restored to the family. Yes,
'tis she

Is the lady in question, and I have been running
here and there
To diffame my own daughter to my neighbour, and
thanks to you
Have been a pretty fool! And if his son returns,—
For now I am so confused that whether he's living
or dead
I have not a notion,—but if, I say, he should return,
And ask Antiphila's hand, would then Menedemus
believe
That I did not tell him the truth before I knew any
cause
To wish for one thing more than another? I say
be off!
Ask me what you've done? A treasure of innocence
You are! Begone! I'll never see you again. Begone!
*Ph.* For patience' sake, one word from me, sir!
Pamphilus
Was not so much in fault; I am the one to blame:
He truly intended to introduce Antiphila;
And I was sent to fetch her: but when it appeared
her friends
Would not consent to allow that you should interfere
Between Menedemus and her, then, on the spur of
the moment,
The ladies were changed, & that at my suggestion, sir.

*Chr.* I interfere, you say? 'Tis you that interfere,
I think. Pray hold your tongue; or if you wish to advise,
Advise your friend again: he needs it more than I;
Maybe he'll thank you for it. I neither ask nor want it.

*Re-enter Sostrata.*

(*To Pam.*) To you, sir, I have no more to add. Begone at once!
'Twill spare your sister pain, if she sh[d] never know you;
Not that there's aught to lose. Now, if there is anything
You want in the house, go in at once and fetch it. Look,
I'll give you half an hour.

*Sost.* Chremes, what are you saying?

*Chr.* I have only said, wife, what I told you; and you may now
Bid your dear Pamphilus good-bye.

*Sost.* How cruel you are!
Do you wish to kill your son? You'll certainly be his death,
Unless you mind. I wonder how anything so wicked
Could have come into your head.

*Chr.* Oh, will you never learn

To keep your place, woman? Was there ever a thing
Which I ever proposed or did in my whole life, in which
You did not go against me? But sh^d I ask you now
What wrong I am doing, or why I do the thing I do,
You would not know: you could not tell me anything
Of the matter in which so confidently you oppose me.
Fool!

*Sost.* I do not know?

*Chr.* Well, well, you do know. Anything
Rather than have it all over again.

*Sost.* How iniquitous of you,
To prevent my speaking in such a matter!

*Chr.* I don't prevent you. 1300
Go on! Talk yourself hoarse. [*Exit.*

*Pam.* Mother, what shall I do?

*Sost.* What did he say?

*Pam.* He says he disowns me.

*Sost.* Don't give way.
He is angry now: I know he'll soon be kind again.

*Ph.* Quite so, madam; a father's threats are nothing to fear.

*Pam.* I am glad you think so.

*Ph.* Don't be angry with me, Pam!
I've got you into a mess, but if you'll trust to me,
I'll get you out.

*Sost.* How kind of you, Mr. Philogelos!

*Ph.* Take my advice and hide. Pretend you have run away.
I'll say you've sailed to the Persian wars in Clinia's ship.
And when your father finds that Clinia is safe, and he
Demands Antiphila's hand, the rest will be all forgotten.
*Sost.* Is Antiphila to marry Clinia?
*Ph.* Yes, ma'am.
*Sost.* Menedemus' son,
That ran away?
*Ph.* Yes, ma'am.
*Sost.* Why, Chremes said he was killed.
*Ph.* It's all a mistake; you've spoken to him to-day yourself:
He is Clitipho.
*Sost.* O dear! I must tell Chremes this.
How glad I am!
*Ph.* Stay, madam, stay; I pray you won't.
Your husband will find that out quite soon enough for us.
Far better see Menedemus, if he will help us out.
*Sost.* What could he do?
*Ph.* He'll stand our friend. How could he wish
To see Antiphila's brother driven disgraced from home?

*Sost.* Go, Pamphilus, go at once!

*Pam.* Clinia is there; I will.

*Sost.* And can I then tell Chremes?

*Ph.* Madam, consider this:

He won't believe you, and after will only be angry with you

For knowing it first, and being in the right when he was wrong.

*Sost.* 'Tis all so strange, that really and truly I don't suppose

That any one would believe it. It may be best to wait.

But you should waste no time, Pamphilus; go at once.

*Pam.* I go, but do not tell him where I am gone.

*Sost.* No, son. [*Exit Pam.*

I'll do my best to win him. (*To Ph.*) I thank you, sir, very kindly.

*Ph.* I wish you good success. [*Exit Sostrata.*

A sensible body. I lean

On her and old Menedemus. Not that I doubt myself;

I know a stroke to play: is't not the feast of Bacchus?

I will invoke the god; his genius will confound

This dull, contrary Chremes. What's his humour worth

To gods or men, that I should bow to it? Nay, & since

Whate'er the humour be, 'tis the persistency

That carries it; to hell with dumps! 'Twere póor
mérriment
That Chremes' frown could dash. Why, if there be
a choice
'Twixt Chremes pleased and Chremes angry, of the two
This latter, angry Chremes is the more ridiculous.

# ACT · V

*MENEDEMUS and CLINIA.*

*MENEDEMUS.*

YOU have made me, my dear Clinia, the very happiest of fathers,
By this return to your senses; indeed I ran great risk
Of taking leave of my own: but since I have you back,
'Tis nothing but happiness: and gladly I now consent
To the match, which hitherto in your own interest
I have only opposed because I would not have you marry
A woman not freeborn. To be sure I cd have wished
'Twas somebody else's daughter than Chremes'. After all
It might be worse. But are you sure you hold to it still,
And wish to marry her?

*CLINIA.*

I, father? How can you ask?

*Men.* You are young to marry; but, mind, I should not make your age
An objection, provided I thought you knew what marriage is.

But do you, can you know? You have only experience
Of childhood, and some few years of youthful liberty:
What can thát teach? Your tie to me, your friendships,—
Some intimate friendships too: but nothing here nor there
Comparable to the bond of marriage. Suppose I say
'Tis, next to existence, the most familiar thing in the world:—
Then judge how jealous pride & self-regard should be,
Ere they admit this master circumstance to rule,
As rule it must. You know the story Plato tells
Of Er, the Armenian soldier, & what he saw in death,
Permitted to stand between the gates of heaven and hell;
How there he saw the souls, who, ere they came on earth,
Were choosing each their lives in turn—and, what was strange,
How wantonly and without deliberation they chose,
Making a rush at what they fancied first: and this,
So Plato said, explained man's discontent on earth,
His misery being his fault. All wh, be it fable or no,
Clinia, has this much truth; that you may see the like
Without going down to the grave, nor any revelation
Of nature's secrecies—but every day on earth,

In men that wive. With them the stake is no less great;
Their carelessness in choice, their after-discontent
Match each in kind. Now I would play the interpreter
To you, as some celestial did to Er: I warn you,
Take not this step in haste. You choose a second being:
The lives are strewn before you: is this the best to take?

*Clin.* O if you knew Antiphila, father, you would not ask.

*Men.* Very well. I see your choice is made. I only wish
She did not drink.

*Clin.* O father! you know—

*Men.* Yes, yes. I know.
What a number of sad mistakes Chremes has made to-day!
He has not discovered yet who the two Persians were,
Who came to frighten me.

*Clin.* I hope I need not tell you, father,
I never wished that done. I feared you might be grieved:
But Chremes being so sure you never would forgive me . . .

*Men.* Was he?

*Clin.* He said you told him.

*Men.* Did he? He has been to blame.
There's much he will have to explain to me, which he will not wish
Another to hear. Retire to the garden, while I go
And smooth things over with him, and ask his daughter's hand.

*Clin.* How long?

*Men.* Well, if I send, be ready at once to come:
And see that Pamphilus too is handy: explain to him,
That if I can be happy enough to make his peace with his father,
His presence will then be needed.

*Clin.* I hope it will not be long. [*Exit.*

*Men.* I am not very wise myself or clever, that I know:
And I may have behaved in a manner open to criticism,
I may have even provoked derision, that may be;
I think I have. But this same would-be helper of mine,
My counsellor and guide, Chremes, is very far beyond me.
I never did anything half so foolish in all my life
As to trust my secrets to him. In time now; here he comes.

*Enter Chremes.*

*CHREMES.*

Ah, my good Menedemus, now I have news indeed.

*Men.* I know it, Chremes, and give you my hearty congratulations.

'Tis a happy day for us both: for you have found a daughter,

And I . . .

*Chr.* You know it already? Who told you?

*Men.* My son.

*Chr.* Your son!

*Men.* Clinia. Yes. He is in my house. I was coming across

To ask you to join your treasure so newly found with mine:

And to give your daughter to-day to my son in marriage.

*Chr.* Well!

I cannot understand it. Where did he come from? When?

*Men.* Why, that's the strangest of all: he landed only this morning,

Met your son in the town; & has been in your house Ever since.

*Chr.* My house?

*Men.* It seems your son is a friend of his:
He introduced him, but under another name, because
He did not wish to be known.

*Chr.* Not Clitipho?

*Men* Ay, 'twas that.

*Chr.* There then! O how I have been deceived!
And you were right
About the Persians too: they were a make-believe.

*Men.* So I guessed all along, Chremes.

*Chr.* But who then were they?

*Men.* Forgive me, my good friend, I ask you once for all,
The annoyance my family affairs have been to you to-day.
Your kindness has brought you only vexation.

*Chr.* O, I am sure
You are welcome enough to any service that I can render.

*Men.* Then pray oblige me in this, and overlook the folly
Of the actors in this farce. The intention was to deceive
Me and not you: till you accidentally, as it seems,
Came in their way: and then they could not help themselves:
They even tried to avoid you.

*Chr.* Who were they?

*Men.* Remember too
'Tis the feast of Bacchus to-day; 'tis not so great a crime
To droll on a private person, at a time that is set apart
For mirth and jollity, and when buffoonery too makes up
A part of the festival.

*Chr.* I think no gentleman
Should suffer buffoonery to cover an insult.

*Men.* Supposing not,
Yet none was intended.

*Chr.* Who were they?

*Men.* The deceit was planned for me,
And I forgive it.

*Chr.* Who were they?

*Men.* They came from yóur house.

*Chr.* Not Clinia?

*Men.* No; although it was done in his interest.
Your son was one, and a friend . . .

*Chr.* I know: Philolaches.
I see.

*Men.* It seems they had drawn from you, I know not how,
Somewhat too harsh a picture of me: so 'twas resolved
To put me to proof.

*Chr.* Menedemus, since 'twas my own son,
It does not matter; for now my account with him is closed.

*Men.* What say you?

*Chr.* Well, never mind. He is now no more my son.

O Menedemus, indeed he has treated me shamefully.
This morning I thought your son had acted ill by you:
How willingly now I'd change.

*Men.* You make too much of it.
No harm was meant; and none has been done: a foolish hoax,
And nothing more.

*Chr.* You cannot hope to persuade me now
There is any excuse for a son deceiving his own father.

*Men.* I think a father would find one, Chremes, where there was none.

*Chr.* Nay, nay: no more of him. I understand you came
About my daughter.

*Men.* I did. Clinia asks her hand.

*Chr.* You know she is not that woman they made me think . . .

*Men.* I know.

*Chr.* Menedemus, I never wished to have a daughter. I thought

A girl was a burden, the worst possession a man could have;
Costly to rear, costly to keep, costly to get rid of.
It seems I was wrong. I have had a daughter, who from her cradle
Has never cost me a single penny, and the very hour
She is thrown on my hands, she has offers of marriage. 'Tis not for me
To hinder the kindness of heaven. You are welcome to take her. Yet
I have one condition: the dowry.

*Men.* Certainly: about that
We shall not quarrel however. My son will be rich: and you
Will give as you think is fit.

*Chr.* I still shall insist on terms.
You will not oppose a project of mine?

*Men.* I promise not;
Consider it settled: & now let us put the business off,
And bring the two young lovers happily face to face.
I long to see Antiphila.

*Chr.* Wait. I'll call my wife, [*Goes to* L.
And tell her to bring her out.

*Men.* And I will call my son. [*Goes to* R.
(*Calling*) Clinia!

*Re-enter Clinia.*

*Clin.* Father!

*Men.* Come! Is Pamphilus there?

*Clin.* He is.

*Men.* Let him be ready.

*Enter Sostrata and Antiphila.*

*Chr.* See here, Menedemus, my daughter.

*Men.* And mine.

My dear Antiphila, I fear you have heard hard tales of me:

I have therefore the greater pleasure in bringing you, now we meet,

The joy I have stood in the way of. I have asked your good father

To grant your hand to my son in marriage: he has consented.

See, here is Clinia. Let me join your hands—for ever. Be happy.

*SOSTRATA.*

(*Aside.*) The dear old man; see how he weeps for joy.

*Chr.* You will not deny me now, Menedemus, I'm sure: you'll come

And spend what is left of the day at my house. You will dine with us?

*Men.* With all my heart. You have not presented me to your wife.

I beg . . .

*Chr.* Come, Sostrata, come & make your compliments
To our new relation.

*Men.* Your servant, madam.

*Sost.* O sir, I am glad
My Antiphila will have your son for a husband.

*Men.* I am very proud
Of such a daughter-in-law. But now, if I may ask,
Where is your son Pamphilus? He should not be absent now. 1481

*Chr.* Don't ask for him.

*Sost.* I beseech you speak with my husband, sir.

*Chr.* I beg, Menedemus, you'll say no more. I have cast him off.

*Men.* I still shall venture to plead his forgiveness.

*Chr.* 'Tis too late.
I have sent him off already: he is gone.

*Men.* Not so: he is here.
(*Calls*) Pamphilus! (*To Chremes*) Do not blame me; I promised to plead for him.

*Enter Pamphilus.*

*Chr.* How dare you again appear in my presence, wretch? Be off!

I tell you that I disown you. Yes, Menedemus, & you
Will not attempt, I beg, to avert the punishment
He more than deserves. I have cast him away and cut him off.
My whole fortune I leave to Antiphila—that is the thing
I said I sh^d ask—you promised not to oppose me: now
I beg you will not.

*Men.* Consider if you are wise.

*Chr.* Not wise?

*Sost.* O you are very unwise!

*Chr.* Wife!

*Sost.* Why, he is your son!

*Chr.* Extremely kind of you to say so! there's not a doubt in the world
He is yours: but were I you, I sh^d not be very vain,
Being mirrored in such a cub.

*Sost.* O Chremes, your own son!

*Chr.* Not were he twice my son, and sprung from my head, as they say
Minerva was from Jove's, would I own him.

*PAMPHILUS.*

Consider, sir,
My mother's feelings, although you do not consider me.

*Chr.* I do not consider you, sir? In all I have done,
I have kept
You and your follies in view: considering what you
are,
I thought you would rather think I considered you
too much.
I consider you reckless, sir; I consider that you
pursue
Your pleasure and vulgar tastes. I consider you quite
unfit
To be trusted with money, and so I have hit on a
plan, by which
You'll be, I consider, spared the trouble of manag-
ing it;
And though not launched on the world as I'd wish
to see my son,
You'll be, I consider, ensured from absolute desti-
tution.
Unable to leave you my wealth, I turn to those that
are next,
To them I do not shrink from entrusting it; and
I consider,
That at their house, Pamphilus, you will always find
at least
A refuge, food & clothes, & a roof above your head.
*Pam.* Good God!

*Chr.* Don't swear.—'Tis better than that you should be my heir,
And Gorgo squander it. Eh, sir?
*Pam.* O, I wish I was dead.
*Chr.* First learn what 'tis to live: when you know that, if life
Displease you still, then wish to die.
*Men.* Chremes, allow me
To urge you in this. You could not really wish him to go
To Persia, say, and forsake you, as Clinia díd mé.
*Chr.* Forsake me! why, let him go to perdition for all I care,
Rather than stay at home and drag his father down
To beggary with his vices and follies: for if I once
Were saddled with his expenses, I guess 'twould come very soon
To my using that spade of yours, Menedemus, in good earnest.
*Men.* You offered me your advice this morning; now I in turn . . .
*Chr.* I do not need advice.
*Men.* Spoil not so happy a day.
*Chr.* I have found a daughter to-day, Menedemus, but lost a son.

*Men.* You have lost your daughter to me, let me restore your son.

*Sost.* O do forgive him, Chremes; you must.

*Chr.* Pray, silence, wife.

*Clin.* Me, sir, you cannot blame for taking a brother's part.

His fault was partly mine: and what was wrongly done
Was done in my behalf.

*Chr.* No, no, there's no excuse.

*Enter Philolaches as a Persian.*

*Men.* Why, here's our friend the Persian.

*Chr.* Pray, sir, what will you?

*PHILOLACHES.*

I hear you have been enquiring for me in the town. Behold me!

*Chr.* I do not want you now: I know, sir, who you are.
The game is all played out. We have done with masquerades,
And personating others.

*Ph.* I may take it then I address
Chremes, and not Menedemus?

*Chr.* You do, sir; and be so kind

As now to restore me the money, which under a false pretence
You made me give you to-day.
*Ph.* 'Tis not the Persian custom.
*Chr.* You and your Persian customs be hanged, sir; and I believe
You're more than half to blame for all the impertinence
I have suffered to-day.
*Ph.* I am, sir; I came to make the confession;
But if you know it already, why do you spite your son?
I have been your guest to-day, & if I have overstrained
The liberty of the feast, I am ready in turn to pay
The penalty. In the name of Bacchus, disown and cast off me,
Disinherit me if you will. But him, your flesh & blood,
Pity and forgive.
*Men.* Yes, Chremes.

*ANTIPHILA.*

O father, do give in!
*Chr.* Now that's the first time, lass, you have called me father. I see
I shall have to yield.
*Ant.* O thank you.
*Chr.* Stay. If I do give in,

'Tis only on two conditions.

*Men.* I'll answer for Pamphilus,
That he'll accept them: what are they?

*Chr.* First, my forty pounds;
To get that back from Gorgo.

*Pam.* I can't do that.

*Chr.* You can't?

*Men.* You spent that money, Chremes, advanced it rather for me,
Thinking to do me a service. I'll ask you let it be me
Who does it for you. I'll gladly pay it: it is not lost.
Consider this condition fulfilled.

*Chr.* You are kinder far
To my boy than he has deserved.

*Men.* And what is the other matter?

*Chr.* This. He must marry.

*Pam.* Father!

*Chr.* I will not hear a word.

*Men.* I'll vouch for him that he will do it.

*Chr.* He does not say so himself.

*Pam.* No use,—impossible.

*Sost.* Can you hesitate, Pamphilus?

*Chr.* Nay, let him do as he likes.

*Men.* He'll do it—everything.

*Sost.* This must seem strange at first & disagreeable,
Before you have even thought of it. When you know more of it,
You'll like it.

*Pam.* I will, father.

*Chr.* Good! son: for though a wife
Is an evil, she is a necessary evil, and one to which
You will get accustomed in time. 'Tis more respectable too
To be married; and the only cure for a temper such as yours.

*Sost.* I'll help you choose, my dear Pamphilus; I know who—

That clever, charming girl, whom you'll be in love with directly;
The orphan niece of our old neighbour, Phanocrates.

*Pam.* What, not that red-haired thing, with a mouth from ear to ear,
And a little knob of a nose. I couldn't.

*Chr.* Why, only see
How nice he has grown: it's plain he means what he says now.

*Sost.* Why, I'm sure, Pamphilus, she is a pinnacle of perfection.
But I know another.

*Pam.* No, no; if I am to marry, be hanged!

I'll choose for myself. I know of a girl will do very well.

*Sost.* Who is it?

*Pam.* Archonides' daughter.

*Sost.* You cd not have pleased me more.

*Chr.* My word! I do believe my wife & I are agreed
On something at last. O wonderful day!

*Sost.* Chremes, I knew
'Twould end like this.

*Chr.* Now, wife! none of your prophecies.
Come in, come all to dinner.

*Pam.* Philolaches was asked;
May he come too?

*Chr.* Oh yes! if it's the Persian custom.
I'll bear no grudge to-day; come in, sir, with the rest,
And help to make us merry. This is THE FEAST OF BACCHUS.

# NERO PART II



FROM THE DEATH OF BURRUS TO
THE DEATH OF SENECA
COMPRISING
THE CONSPIRACY OF PISO



# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

## As in first part

*NERO*
*SENECA*
*LUCAN* . . . . *a poet, nephew to Seneca.*
*PETRONIUS* . . . . *a gentleman of Rome.*
*TIGELLINUS* . *prætorian prefect (successor to Burrus).*
*THRASEA* . . . . . *a stoic senator.*
*PRISCUS* . . . *a young stoic, lover of Fannia.*
*GRIPUS* . . . . *a Neapolitan boatman.*
*POPPÆA* . . . . . *now wife to Nero.*

## New Characters in this part

*CLITUS* . . . *a Christian, brother of Epicharis.*
*PISO* . . . . . *a nobleman.*
*NATALIS* . . . *confidential follower of Piso.*
*SCEVINUS, a rich lord* . . . } courtiers.
*SENECIO, an upstart gentleman* . . } courtiers.
*QUINTIAN, a court poet* . . . } courtiers.
*PROCULUS* . *Admiral (successor to Anicetus).*
*LATERANUS* . . . . . *Consul elect.*
*RUFUS* . . . *shared prefecture with Tigellinus.*
*FLAVUS, a tribune* . . . . } under Rufus.
*ASPER, a centurion* . . . . } under Rufus.
*VATINIUS* . . *Nero's fool (successor to Paris).*
*CASSIUS* . . *a guardsman, distinguished by his size.*

*ACTE* . . . . . *Nero's early mistress.*
*EPICHARIS* . *daughter of a tavern-keeper at Naples.*
*FANNIA* . . *Thrasea's daughter, marries Priscus.*
*PAULLINA* . . . . . *wife to Seneca.*

*Officers, Attendants, Sailors, Soldiers, Citizens, etc.*

# NERO PT. II

## ACT · I

### SCENE · 1

(As Prologue.)

*Rome. Thrasea's house. THRASEA and PRISCUS.*

*THRASEA.*

WHAT is it, Priscus, that hath led thee now
To pledge my ear to closer secrecy
Than what thy loving trust alway command?

*PRISCUS.*

I fear to tell.

*Thr.* Suppose then I tell thee.
I know thy sickness, and I hold the cure.

*Pr.* Nay, sir: I rank among the incurables.

*Thr.* Bravo! that is well said. I have watched thee, Priscus,

All the six years I have known thee—'tis six years :
I have seen thine eye grow steadier, and thy smile
Softer and kinder, and thy speech, which once
Crackled in flame and smoke, hath stilled to a fire
That comforts my old age. Even as thy body
Hath statelier motion, so is't with thy mind,
Which ripen'd manners clothe in rich reserve.

*Pr.* What wilt thou say ?

*Thr.* Hearken ! 'tis some days since
I have noted thy disturbance and rejoiced.
'Tis ill with them, who quake not at the touch
Of the world's Creator. Thou hast come to tell me
Thou lov'st my daughter.

*Pr.* Ah, sir !

*Thr.* Is't not so ?

*Pr.* Her name is the oath whereby I seal all truth.

*Thr.* And well : thou'rt worthy of her ; in saying which
I mean thy praise, for she is worthy of thée.
Nay, while she lives I go not from the world ;
Death sucks me not, though on his iron ladder
My years descend : she will be Thrasea still,
Without his struggles. Let me acquaint thee, son,
With one condition which I have thought to make,
Ere I commit her to thy trust.

*Pr.* Good Thrasea,

I know not how to thank thee; but, forgive me,
My secret was not this.
*Thr.* Not this?
*Pr.* Nay, sir.
Of late I have passed my life half in a dungeon,
Half in the garden, where thou bidst me forth
To bask in my love's joy: which in my duty
I had spoken of to thee openly, but all
Hath come so quickly: now, a happier way,
I meet thy favour unsolicited.
Let nothing vex this hour; I long to hear
Thy one requirement, which my full consent
Leaps to embrace unheard, that thou mayst join
Fannia and me.
*Thr.* 'Tis but a form. I ask
A promise of thee, Priscus, that thou wilt not
For ten years join any conspiracy
Against the Emperor.
*Pr.* Why?
*Thr.* For Fannia's sake,
Lest Nero kill thee: and for thy sake too.
*Pr.* And why ten years?
*Thr.* Ten years is a fair term.
Thou wilt be old in prudence then.
*Pr.* Such prudence
Let me die ere I learn. How would'st thou, sir,

For ten years bind me down in slavery
To flatter a tyrant?

*Thr.* Who said flatter? Stay:
Impatience cannot help. The case is thus.
Since Burrus died, Nero hath broken loose:—
Seneca's leading-string hath snapped in the midst
Without a strain:—in greed of absolute power
His will cast off restraint; in the possession
His tottering reason doth the like. His lust,
His cruelty, his effeminate, blundering passion
For art and brutal vice are but the brag
Of a hideous nature, which will force the bounds
Of human action, till the shames of Rome
Shame shameless Rome to wipe away her shame.
That is a balance which I cannot poise,
How much shame Rome will bear; but when I hear
The whispers of revolt, and now one name
And now another cast out like a fly
To fish opinion, I give little heed,
For these two reasons; first, there's not a man
Among the chiefs of faction of such mark
As to make change secure: the second, this,
That lacking such a leader there's no party
That can command opinion. Nero's fall,
When he shall fall, will be in a flooding wave
Of common judgment. What the extravagance

Of crime is weak to move, some unforeseen
And trifling circumstance may on a sudden
Deliver; and the force that none can raise
None shall control. Await the rising tide,
It will not need us.

*Pr.* Some, sir, cannot wait.
I came to tell thee how I had given my name
To a conspiracy.

*Thr.* The gods forbid!
With whom?

*Pr.* I may not name their names.

*Thr.* Nay, nay:
But who is the pretender?

*Pr.* Seneca.

*Thr.* Seneca! Seneca! Hath he consented?

*Pr.* We are such, sir, as can win him.

*Thr.* Why, I know you;
The senatorial patriots. There'll be Lucan,
Cassius and Lateranus, Fænius Rufus,
Flavus, perhaps Vestinus . . .

*Pr.* Who they be
Will presently be seen.

*Thr.* O, I am in time
To stay you yet. This plot is merely mischief,
Seneca's death.

*Pr.* Not if 'tis Nero's death.

*Thr.* Think, man! If first ye go to Seneca,
Ere ye slay Nero, he will not consent:
Never, be sure. And if ye first slay Nero,
Seneca's nowhere. Others will spring up,
Piso, and all the Augustan family,
Plautus, Silanus . . .
*Pr.* But if Seneca
Consent . . .
*Thr.* What! to that crime?
*Pr.* He hath consented
To like before.
*Thr.* Well, but the wrongs he hath done
His pride alloys, or in pretensed retirement
Repudiates; and, could he feel his guilt,
That were remorse, whose sick and painful palsy
Cannot raise hand to strike. Think you that he,
Who laughed at Claudius' death; who let be slain
His old friend and protectress Agrippina;
Who glozed the murder of Britannicus;
Who hid his protest when Octavia fell;
That he will turn about and say, 'Such things
I did for Nero, and the good of Rome:
Now, since he sings at Naples on the stage,
I do repent me, and will kill my pupil;
Will take myself the power I made for him,
And shew how I intended he should rule!'

This were a Roman but not Seneca.
*Pr.* We look not fór it óf him.
*Thr.* 'Tis all one.
Seneca! the millionaire!
*Pr.* If he consent,
Wé restore the republic.
*Thr.* The Republic!
The Decii and Camilli will you bring us?
That kingly yeoman, frugal Curius?
Can you restore the brave considerate Gracchi,
And Cato's stern unconquerable soul? . .
O nay: but Seneca the imperialist!——
Priscus, if Seneca refuse, thou'lt make
A promise for ten years?
*Pr.* With that reserve;
And wilt thou not say five years?
*Thr.* I'll say five,
If thou wilt promise.
*Pr.* Then, if Seneca
Refuse, I pledge myself to take no part
In any plot against the emperor
For five years.
*Thr.* Come within, Fannia is thine. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE · 2

*Naples. A marine tavern, the open court of it, with fountain at centre, and low colonnade around. On the left at a table some Mariners are drinking and playing with dice. On the right are Officers sitting apart and drinking. Towards the front PROCULUS (the Admiral) and SENECIO. EPICHARIS is serving the Officers.*

*SENECIO.*

I do beg of you, my lord!

*PROCULUS.*

Why so frightened, sir, at a little trembling of the soil? Had the Gods any appetite to swallow you, think you that they would trouble to provide warnings for your escape?

*Seo.* I do pray you, my lord admiral, take me on board your galley for to-night; only for to-night.

*Pro.* We are under Cæsar's orders to sail for the Adriatic, sir; else I might strain to make some cabin accommodation: but then that would be for the ladies. Epicharis, help this gentleman to wine; he's nervous: some more drink, and I think he'll be as brave as any of us.

*EPICHARIS.*

'Twill be at my cost, your excellence.

*Pro.* Nay, I'll cover that. Come, drink, sir, and cheer your soul. That's the only kindness I can do you.

*Sec.* Thank you, my lord, but I . . (*a rumbling heard.*) Oh! oh! there it is again.

*Ep.* (*to Senecio*). 'Tis safe enough in our court, sir; if you sit from the walls.

*Pro.* And fill for me, fair hostess. Wilt not thou come aboard my ship?

*Ep.* Your ship, my lord?

*Pro.* 'Tis against the rules of the service: but they provide not for these earthquakes.

*Ep.* Ha! ha! you jest, my lord.

*Pro.* We have no wars to occupy us: why should I not give shelter to the ladies, that fear to be ashore?

*Ep.* That would not be me, my lord. We rode out worse shakings last year. 160

*Pro.* Come, I'll have thee come. Should Cæsar hear of it, I can take care of myself. (*They talk.*)

(*Mariners to each other.*)

*FIRST MARINER.*

He was a-acting of Niobby.

*SECOND MARINER.*

Niobe, who was Niobe?

*THIRD MARINER.*

A first-rate, went down with all hands off Andros, the year of Claudius' death.

*1st.* True, mate; that was our Niobby. But this was a Greek lady that lost all her children at a clap; bad luck with her name!

*2nd.* The Emperor would have made to be her, as 'twere; was it?

*1st.* 'Twas a tragedy, look: and that's just where it is. Everybody is somebody else, and nothing's as it should be.

*2nd.* That's right: he were dressed out like a woman.

*1st.* Did ye not see him, nodding to the music, and throwing his hands about? then he gets red in the face, then he should stoop down to catch his breath, (*he acts*) then creening up again he should throw back his head, and ei! ei! (*Screams. All laugh loudly.*)

*Pro.* Hell and thunder! Silence there!

*MARINERS* (*to themselves*).

Why, if we mayn't laugh in the theater, nor out of it!

*Pro.* (*to Officers*). Here's a gentleman, who would go to sea to escape being shaken. Shall we take him a cruise?

*FIRST OFFICER.*

Frightened by the earthquake, sir? I do not blame you.

*Seo.* When the gods shake your city, as a terrier does a rat.

*1st Off.* But how should the sea cure you? 'Tis their common plaything.

*Pro.* Indeed, sir, you would learn what heavings be. These land movements are nought. What would you say to thirty feet up and down three times a minute? with now your bows in the air and now your stern: pitched now forward, now backward, now rolled from side to side; thrust up to heaven till your brains are full of air, then sunk down till your belly squirms, inside out, outside in! 201

*Seo.* Maybe, sir: but the roof will not fall on your head: the waves do not crack your walls. Your ships being constructed mainly of wood . . .

*Pro.* But the rocks, sir, are mainly constructed of stone, upon which if a wooden-constructed ship be driven, there's no man that would not pay his fortune down to set one foot on the most quakeful or boggy ground 'twixt Ganges and Gades. And there be

monsters, too, which, though I have never seen them, will swallow, they say, your whole ship at a gulp, as you do your wine.

(*The house trembles, some jars fall: all run to centre.*)

*Seo.* There 'tis again! Oh! oh!

(*A great crash heard.*)

*Mar.* Belay there!

*Seo.* Oh! oh! ye gods in heaven!

*1st Off.* Steady, my men, steady!

*Mar.* Ay, ay, sir.

*1st Off.* Order! To your seats!

*Ep.* Sit and drink, gentlemen. Wine shall be cheap to-day. The life in the earth will crack my jars. A few more rumbles like that will drain the cellars.

*1st Off.* (*to men*). We're safe here as anywhere, lads; if you keep an eye to the main-walls. It's all plasterwork aloft.

*Enter Clitus.*

*CLITUS.*

Epicharis! Art thou here, Epicharis? 225

*Pro.* (*to Epicharis*). Who is this scared fellow?

*Cli.* Epicharis, 'tis come: the day is come! Fly from this place!

*Ep.* (*to Proc.*). 'Tis my poor brother, sir: heed him not; he is simple.

*Cli.* (*come to Epi.*). Seest thou not, 'tis the end, the day of wrath?

The earth shakes and the dead rise from their tombs.

*Pro.* (*to 1st Off.*). By Pluto, if he be not one of them!

*Ep.* (*to Clit.*). Sit down quietly, Clitus, for a minute: I can speak with you presently.

*Cli.* O Madness! Come from this hell: fly while thou mayst!

*Mar.* Ay, sit, mate, sit! be not afeard! sit with us!

*Cli.* Woe to you, slaves of Babylon! woe cometh
To the queen that sits upon the seven hills.

*1st Mar.* That is Rome: the seven hills is Rome. What of Babylon?

*Cli.* Rome shall be burned with fire, Babylon burned,
Her smoke shall curl to heaven.

*Enter Gripus, out of breath.*

*GRIPUS.*

Gone, she's gone down!

*Pro.* What's gone, man?

*Gri.* The theater; foundered, sir, gone clean down. I had just got well clear of her, when she gave a lurch, and plumped under starn-foremost in a cloud of dust.

*Cli.* (*to Epic.*). Come, come, Epicharis, I pray thee!

*Seo.* Is this the gods, or is it not the gods? (*drinks.*)

*Pro.* That was the crash. 252

*Cli.* (*dragging at Epic.*). Thou shalt, thou must.

*Ep.* (*freeing herself*). One moment, Clitus, please!

*Gri.* (*to Proc.*). I ran to know, my lord, if you'll have the boats.

*Ep.* Were any killed, Gripus? tell us.

*Gri.* 'Twas a wonder; all the folk had just left her, I near the last; I felt dizzy-like, and saw the street seem anyhow: then I looked at the theater, and she was full of crinks and chinks, when down she went all to pieces. A little sooner and we had been buried alive.

*1st Off.* Emperor and all.

*Seo.* O ye gods! (*drinking*) I drink to thee, old dustman (*to Gripus*).

*Pro.* Off with you, my men: in five minutes I'll be aboard. (*To Epic.*) Come, lass!

(*Mariners go out with Gripus.*)

*Ep.* Come where, my lord?

*Pro.* Why, aboard with me.

*Ep.* Ha ha! I thank you, but I cannot.

*Pro.* Wouldst thou be buried alive?

*Ep.* There is my old bed-ridden mother, my lord; I'll not leave her.

*Pro.* Well, stick to your ship, like a true girl. You, Calvus, pay the charges and follow.

*Seo.* Who's afraid now, my lord! Is it not the gods?

*Pro.* They take much pains to frighten us, sir.

[*Exit.*

*Seº.* And me, with a wife and family. I care not.

*1st Off.* (*paying*). Thou'lt be buried with thy jars, Epicharis.

*Ep.* Balmed in good wine, eh! Add me yet a denarius for lord Senecio's drink.

*Seº.* Two; I have drunk two.

*1st Off.* Here's for him.

*Seº.* (*drinking*). Your health, sir! If you wish to know the cause of all this, I can inform you. 'Tis the emperor's cursed singing hath done it. He hath offended the gods. To call himself Apollo on the one hand, and on the other to sing in the theatre. What else could he expect? I give him his due, he cares not for the gods.

*Ep.* He doth not, sir.

*Seº.* Nor I either: not much.

*1st Off.* Good-night, lass: may we meet again!

*Ep.* No fear. [*Exit 1st Off. with the others.*

(*Senecio remains, and Clitus, who stands aloof.*)

*Ep.* (*to Senecio*). Follow thou, follow them. 300

*Seº.* They won't have me.

*Ep.* Nor will I. I wonder thou durst even show thy face after all thy vain promises. Thou that wouldst bring me to Cæsar, and I know not what.

*Seº.* I can, I shall yet.

*Ep.* Begone, see you, begone.

*Seº.* Look what I had brought thee (*showing a book*).

*Ep.* A book I do believe.

*Seº.* Purple edges and gold knops.

*Ep.* Seneca on morals, I suppose.

*Seº.* No. 'Tis Lucan's book. This can bring thee to Cæsar. This little book hath great treasons in it.

*Ep.* Treason! ha! and I to inform, to show it to Cæsar?

*Seº.* Well, if not, think what his friends might give to recover it.

*Ep.* You should have sold it yourself and brought me the money.

*Seº.* 'Twould be guessed whence I whizzled it.

*Ep.* Wretch! in what villany wouldst thou snare me? Give it me. (*Takes it.*) From whom didst thou steal it?

*Seº.* Only from a friend.

*Ep.* I'll save thy friends from thee, and first myself. Begone! begone!

*Seº.* Thou wilt come to Rome, Epicharis?

*Ep.* (*thrusting him out*). Begone! [*Exit Senecio.* (*To Clitus*) Now, brother.

*Cli.* O sister, my sister, my Epicharis!
To hear that name defiled! In what a pit

Of sin thou livest, diest; 'mong the swine
Perishest! Ah, by God's mercy, 'tis not too late:
Fly with me, fly!

*Ep.* Fly whither?

*Cli.* From thy sin.
If the Judge find thee here, thou'rt lost.

*Ep.* Dear Clitus,
What judge?

*Cli.* Why, He who made thee.

*Ep.* (*aside*). Alas! alas!

*Cli.* Be found with me, perchance I may prevail.

*Ep.* Where would you fly?

*Cli.* Last night in heavenly vision
Paul stood before me, as when three years ago
I saw him at Puteoli: one hand
Outstretched he stood and beckoned me to Rome.
Thither I go: 'tis my last call to thee:
Thou wilt not see me again until the day
When I shall hide my face for pity of thee,
And stop mine ears to hear thy anguished cry
For mercy, thy vain cry.

*Ep.* You go to Rome!

*Cli.* Think, sister: we were once so closely bound.
When we were children in what secret fondness
We linked our hands and hearts; how oft we pledged
Our innocent oaths that we would never part!

Now shall the great gulf fixed 'twixt heaven and hell
Divide us? I saved, and thou lost, for ever!
That endless life of glory I dread, with thee
Not there, not there!

*Ep.* Is't to our uncle's house
You go?

*Cli.* The house of Gaius on the Tiber,
The seventh door above the Cestian bridge:
There shalt thou find immortal life.

*Ep.* Dear brother,
Go not to Rome: your sect is there suspected.
Stay here: or, if you will go, stay at least
Till I can come with you.

*Cli.* The time is short.
Tarry not: come to-night!

*Ep.* Nay, not to-night.

*Cli.* I may not stay for thee.

*Ep.* I cannot come.

*Cli.* Thou wilt not come.

*Ep.* How can you bid me, Clitus,
To leave our helpless mother in all this terror?

*Cli.* Ah! thou wilt never come; thou'rt lost, lost, lost. [*Exit.*

*Ep.* Pure, noble heart, why should I love thee more
Now thou art mad?—I did him wrong not yielding
To his delusions. He hath none to love him

But me, and I have let him think that I desert him.
—Go with him tho' I cannot, I will follow,
And quickly too. To-morrow I'll to Rome. [*Exit.*

## SCENE · 3

*A passage or ante-room in Seneca's house in Rome.*

*Enter SENECA with papers in his hand.*

*SENECA* (*calling*).

Paullina!— 371
Thus go my mornings: now 'tis scarce two hours
To dinner. (*Calling.*) Paullina! Paullina!—The wretched beggars
Multiply every day. I feed half Rome
With doles. 'Tis fortunate that trading thrives.
Paullina!

*PAULLINA* (*within*).

I hear thee: I come. (*Enters.*)

*Sen.* Ah, here thou art!
Look, love, they are bringing wine to-day from Cales,
Ninety-two jars by the invoice;—lay them down
In the new cellar. Here's two hundredweight
Of pepper that I have bought: see that be weighed
And warehoused, for the quoted price is low.

Next, this is Alban raisins, eighteen casks:
They may go with the pepper. A ship's arrived
At Ostia laden with black Spanish wool:
Send that to the factor. That's all: but remember
Our bailiff from Nomentum comes this afternoon:
He is short of hands. Mind he pick sturdy fellows;
And check the ration-bills to correspond.
Now lastly, love, I want five hundred copies
Made of my letters to Lucilius.
Bid the clerks set routine aside for this;
'Tis for the provinces. I am pleased, my love,
To think how good the work is; and 'tis new:
'Twill outlast the decayed light-heartedness
Of Horace: 'tis more suitable besides
For plain intelligence, and it should sweeten
The world.

*Pau.* You know I love it, but I fear
You work too hard. How is your health to-day?

*Sen.* A little headach only, and the old stiffness
In the back of my neck: 'tis gout. I think, Paullina,
That I should dine more frugally: to-day
Let it be roasted apples.

*Pau.* Why, you eat nothing:
You should take more, not less. Trust me to give you
What you should eat.

*Sen.* Well, I make no complaint:

Mine are small ailments, and 'tis highest health
To see thee well: what should I do without thee?
Why, all this business that thou takest upon thee
Is a man's work, which, had I to attend to it,
Would rob me of my life: now I am free:
The day is my own.

*Pau.* How will you use my gift?

*Sen.* I am in the vein for writing.

*Pau.* The muse attend thee!

*Sen.* See thou, I have her with me.

(*Unrolls a book and goes into his library reading.*
*Exeunt severally.*)

## SCENE · 4

*Room in Seneca's house. Enter SENECA reading.*

*SENECA.*

*Father, and god of gods, almighty, eternal,*
*Invoked by many names, nature's one lord;*
*Hail! for 'tis right that all men call on thee.*
*For we thine offspring are.*—Well said, Cleanthes!
All things and creatures are as God's possession,
But we his children: and the will we have
To thwart his will, he ruleth to his will,
Owning the ill which he did not create

But by permission; as thou goest to show.
(*Reading.*) *Nor is there any work on earth astir,*
*But by the breath of thy divinity;*
*Nor in the starry pole, nor in the sea,*
*Save what the wicked in their foolish minds*
*Devise: but thou dost order the disorderly,*
*And even unlovely things are dear to thee.*
Let fools hear that, thou second Hercules!
I should not fret; nay, and I shall not fret . . .
There's poignancy in the utterance of this Greek
That I attain not: whether it be the man
Lived nearer to his nature, or that my art
Clogs the clear hues of thought, and in a varnish
Drowns to one tone. Would I had written that!
And this too, where the bliss the poet prays for
His pregnant line is witness that he hath,
*A vision and a share of that high wisdom,*
*Wherewith thy justice governs all things well:*
*That honoured by thee we return thee honour . . .* 440
That honoured by thee we return thee honour . . .
That's admirable, noble: I'll write myself
Something like that. Ay, now I feel it within me:
And while I am warm.—(*A knocking at the door.*)
Of course an interruption
Just as I am stirred. Come in! To mask vexation
In courtesy now.

*Enter Lucan, Priscus, Lateranus and Flavus.*

*LUCAN.*

My dear uncle, good morning.

*LATERANUS and others.*

Good morning, my lord.

*Sen.* Welcome, good nephew Lucan.
Welcome, my lords. Thee, Lateranus, first
Let me congratulate: thou'rt chosen consul
I hear.

*Lat.* That's a month hence. I care not, Seneca,
If I shall live to sacrifice my ox.

*Sen.* Most ominous words!

*Lat.* Excuse my liberty.

*Luc.* Liberty! nay, if thou have any of that,
Thou mayst indeed despair to live a month.

*Sen.* What purpose brings you, sirs? Pray you be seated.

(*They sit. Priscus apart.*)[1]

What would you with me now?

*Lat.* We are come as friends.

*Sen.* No need to tell me this.

*Luc.* But yet there is,
Uncle; thy friends decrease.

[1] *FLAVUS*
*LATERANUS* *SENECA* *PRISCUS*
*LUCAN*

*Sen.* That may well be.
'Tis what old age must look for. I have my books.

*FLAVUS.*

I never saw so many books before.
*Sen.* And all my good tried friends.
*Luc.* Uncle!
*Sen.* Eh!
*Luc.* They say
Poppæa hath Octavia's head in the palace
To play with.
*Sen.* 'Tis a journaler's lie.
*Luc.* Did Fulvia
Not pierce the tongue of Cicero dead?
*Sen.* Fie! fie!
Let journalers traduce their filthy souls:
Why bring ye me their scandals, when to truths,
That daily I must hear, I wish me deaf?
*Luc.* O sir, Rome thinks thou árt deaf: and men whisper
That creeping time devours thee sense by sense,
While thou, death's willing prey, dost sit at home
Wreathing philosophies to hang the tomb
Of liberty, and crown the coward brows
Of icy oblivion. Sir, if this were true,
Well mightst thou wish not hear: but if thou hast not

Forgot the murder of Britannicus . . .

*Sen.* Hush, hush!

*Luc.* Or sweet Octavia's wrongs . . .

*Sen.* Stay, nephew! I say.

*Luc.* The shame of her divorce . . .

*Sen.* None of this, prithee!

For true it is I wish I could forget.

*Luc.* Her transportation and imprisonment
Upon an outlawed isle; that calumny,
Dumb in her faultless presence, might dare trumpet
Charges incredible: and last her death
By a clumsy soldier, 'gainst whose butcher's knife
She struggled childishly, to the stony walls
Screaming in terror. O sir, let no Roman,
Who hath one hand unbound, wish he were deaf.

*Sen.* Enough! enough!

*Luc.* Why this, sir, is a tale
Would damn a tragedy for the overdoing
Of the inhumanities.

*Sen.* Ay, and I think,
Nephew, it gains not by thy rhetoric.

*Lat.* But Nero, sir, is held thy pupil, and thou
In part discredited,—nay, none but thou
Since Burrus died.

*Sen.* Well, well: but Burrus' death
Hath halved my power, and left the lesser half

Helpless in isolation.

*Lat.* That's a fact.

We come, my lord, to bid thee join thy hand
With them that look to thee. There's Fænius Rufus,
That's now in Burrus' place, another Burrus.

*Sen.* Another Burrus! Fifty Rufuses
Would make no part of Burrus. Why! I am grieved
More for his goodness, when I think of him,
Than by all Nero's ill. My staunch friend was he,
Stern as a Roman, tender as a woman:
A simple mind, a clear head, and true heart;
Faithful, unblenched and certain of his path.
All that philosophy has ever taught me
He knew by instinct, and would hit the mark
With careless action, where my reason fumbled
And groped in the dusk. I say, if all the books
I have ever read or writ, could make one man
Like Burrus, with so natural a touch,
And such godlike directness, none would doubt
Of our philosophy.

*Luc.* But now he's gone.

*Sen.* There's none like Burrus.

*Lat.* Lo, my lord, I am one
To dare what Burrus never dared.

*Sen.* What's that?

*Lat.* The tyrant's death.

*Sen.* (*rising*). Ha! Now we have it!
Seal your lips and depart.—And thou too, nephew,
To seek to engage me!
*Lat.* First, my lord; our safety.
*Sen.* Alas, alas! Nay, leave me. I know nothing.
Ye heard I did but guess.
*Luc.* Thou didst guess right.
*Sen.* Ye have wronged me, gentlemen, choosing to make me
Privy to your distempered plots; but rightly
Judged that I would not sacrifice your lives
To save the monster's. Nay: were Nero's death
God's will, as yours it seems, I might rejoice.
But in your scheme to whom would ye entrust
The absolute power? If Nero be pulled down,
Whom would ye bid us worship? The empire needs
A god,—or, if not that, a godlike man,
Plato's philosopher for king.
*Lat.* Agreed!
'Tis a philosopher we have chosen, sir.
*Luc.* Speak not to us of kings and emperors, uncle;
Wé restóre the republic.
*Sen.* Hey! Is't Thrasea
Ye would make emperor?
*Luc.* Thrasea hath no wealth
Nor favour with the people.

*Sen.* Who is't then
That leads your dream a-dance?
*Lat.* Sir, 'tis no dream.
*Sen.* Who then?
*Fla.* (*advancing*). Hail, Cæsar, hail!
*Sen.* Why, man, what's this?
*Fla.* We choose thee Cæsar.
*Luc.* We crown thee.
*Lat.* Hail, great Cæsar!
*Sen.* Me! madmen, me! Cæsar! me! I am retired...
And—oh! no—never. Who hath chosen me?
Is this thy folly, nephew, when thou tell'st me
My friends decrease?
*Luc.* I said the truth: 'tis time
Thou rise and rally them. We have a party.
*Sen.* I have no party.
*Luc.* We may count for yours
All the republicans. Your oratory
Will win the senate, and your wealth the people.
Rufus is ours, and brings the guards; Vestinus,
The consul, ours; here's Lateranus with us,
The consul designate; at Nero's death
Corbulo and the eastern army... 'Tis no party:
'Tis all except a party.
*Sen.* Patience, nephew.
I weigh the names we count. I see . but . yet ...

*Luc.* Nero once slain, 'tis needful for the hour
To name an emperor. The pillaged world,
That tasted five years of thy regence, loves thee;
While those that would restore Rome's public rule
Will hail thy leadership.

*Fla.* Princeps Senatus!

*Sen.* Pray, how far hath this gone?

*Luc.* I have sounded many,
And found them eager if but thou assent.
Yet none knows that we ask thee.

*PRISCUS.*

Thrasea knows.

*Sen.* Ha! Priscus, thou hast been silent all this while:
And what said Thrasea?

*Pr.* In my credit, sir,
I may not tell.

*Sen.* Indeed! And while ye invite me
To plunge into the bowels of Hell, and wrap me
In the blóody purples of a murdered Cæsar,
Thou wouldst hide from me, for some petty scruple,
What my best friend says of it!

*Pr.* I should tell:—
He said you would refuse.

*Sen.* And he said right.
I do refuse.

*All.* Refuse!

*Luc.* Uncle, consider!

*Fla.* We cannot take that word, sir; 'tis not thine.
The state requires thee: there is none but thou.

*Sen.* My word is No, I will not.

*Luc.* Thou wilt nót?
Wilt nót throne virtue in the seat of might?
Not crown philosophy? and in thyself
Fulfil the dream of wisdom, which the world
Hath mocked at as impracticable?

*Sen.* Yea,
And yet shall mock. 'Tis not for me. Ye think
Because I am rich, that I despise not wealth;
Because I have been involved in courtly faction,
I loathe not crime; that what ye have seen to touch me,
Thát I would handle. Can ye thus mistake me?
And deem that I, being such an one to serve you,
Might be entrapped with flattery,—that ye style me
The one man worthy? ay, to rule the world
Ye said: Well! I shall rule it; but not so.
I make my throne here, and with these nibbed reeds
Issue my edicts to the simple-hearted,
To whom all rule shall come: Yes, it shall come
If God's will count for aught.

*Pr.* My lord, consider.
This is the hour to set you right for ever.

'Twas of your doing Nero came to power :
Now with one word you may blot out the past.

*Sen.* Priscus, if thou didst think I was to blame
For all the wrongs and crimes, which by thy speech
Thou wouldst impute, wouldst thou be here to-day
To hail me Cæsar? 'Tis a stingless taunt.

*Lat.* Thou shalt not be reproached.

*Fla.* We do not blame thee.

*Luc.* We ask but thy consent.

*Sen.* Shame, nephew; shame!

*Lat.* Sir, you mistake: we ask not your consent
Unto the deed.

*Fla.* We take that on ourselves.

*Lat.* We ask of thee but this: Nero once slain,
Wilt thou be Cæsar?

*Sen.* No, sir: I will not.

*Fla.* Thou wilt not change thy books for provinces?

*Sen.* No, sir.

*Lat.* Dost thou refuse?

*Luc.* Oh, uncle, uncle!

*Fla.* My lord, allow me.

*Luc.* Hear what I would say.

*Sen.* I know it, nephew, afore. Now let this end.
'Tis said.

*Pr.* I was prepared, my lord, for this:
And we at least may spare you further danger

Of our suspicious conference. I go. (*Moving.*)

*Sen.* The ill is done.

*Fla.* One word. Nero must die;
And whosoe'er but thou steps in his place
Must also die; for none is worthy. Come
At once, ere more be slain. This ends not here.

*Sen.* Thou dost say right: this ends not here: if more
Shall die, thou bearest some blame of it. Farewell!
God can bend all to good: this, which to me
Seems ill, may not be so.

*Lat.* (*going*). Sir, I shall trust you.

*Sen.* Indeed fear not. Now, for my safety & yours,
Leave me, I pray. Farewell!

*All* (*going*). Farewell! [*Exeunt.*

*Sen.* Nay, can it be? Fools! can it be they cried
Seneca, Cæsar? My hand is trembling, my sense
Swimming: 'tis true: my mortal stroke, & dealt me
By would-be friends. The way that least I expected,
When I least looked for it—yea—thus cometh Death.
No hope. I am named. But ah! thou bloody tiger,
Who slewest her that bare thee, now I that trained thee
Might . . yea, I might.—The whole world for a bait
Dangles upon the hook, and I refuse.
I would not; nay, I could not . . . What then do?
Stand firm? with my poor palsied limbs,
Stand firm? budge not a hair, as Burrus put it?

—So take rank in the monster's tale of murders:
My gravity in his comedy of crime:
Suffer in my last act of serious life
His hypocritical smile, his three or four
Crocodile tears: be waved off with a smirk,
'A sacrifice to the safety of the state'?
Oft have I thought of death, to brave his terror,
But ne'er forereckoned thus . . . Why, it were better
To give life its one chance, still play the game.
That may well be: That I'll do: all my skill
Summon to aid me: else 'tis my death,—the end:
That execrable nothing which no art
Of painful thought can reconcile . . .

*Enter Paullina excitedly.*

*PAULLINA.*

Seneca, Seneca!
The Circus Maximus is burned; the fire
Hath reached the embankment—Ah, they have told you?

*Sen.* Nay:
What didst thou say?

*Pau.* The fire, my lord, the fire.
The Circus is burned down, and the Velabrum
Is now a field of flame, that waves in the wind.
Rome will be burned.

*Sen.* A general calamity

Might turn attention from me.

*Pau.* My lord, you are strange.

*Sen.* Paullina, it matters not to me or thee
If the whole world should burn : a little while
And all is nought. There have been here this morning
The heads of a conspiracy.

*Pau.* A conspiracy!

*Sen.* To murder Nero.

*Pau.* Indeed I wonder not.

*Sen.* But who is the man, thinkst thou, whom they would take
To set up in his place ; who, if they fail,
Must fall a sacrifice? Who least desires
The crown? Who least deserves the death? 'Tis he.

*Pau.* Not thee! ah, ah, my lord, not thee!

*Sen.* Take comfort,
Be brave, Paullina ; check thy tears : there is hope ;
There is yet a hope. I shall renounce my wealth,
Place my possessions all in Cæsar's hands,
And stripped to naked, harmless poverty
Fly Rome and power for ever : such a life
I have praised and well may lead—philosophy
Graced by the rich graceth the poor, and I,
Who have sought to crown her, may be crown'd by her.
I'll save my life's last remnant with applause.
Weep not, there's hope : yes, there is yet a hope.

# ACT · II

*A room in the palace, with large windows at back, and doors right and left. The scene remains unchanged throughout the act.*

*SENECIO, SCEVINUS and QUINTIAN.*

*SCEVINUS.*

'TIS abominable, sir. What's your net loss?

*SENECIO.*

I ask you, Quintian, as a man of culture and erudition, what do you make of it?

*QUINTIAN.*

You admit that Cæsar was not drunk?

*Seo.* Had he been drunk, he had had some excuse. 'Twas past midnight when he burst in, turned us all out of bed, and ordered the house to be pulled down; and I a married man. I have a wife and daughters.

*Sce.* Married! well, I never knew that. So your house is pulled down. 681

*Seo.* And half the street, for that matter.

*Qu.* 'Twas done to stay the fire: 'twas well done.

*Seo.* But we were reckoning our danger past: and

'twas so situated, that if he wished to protect his palace he had choice of some four streets: and he chooses mine, and begins with me, my house, Senecio's house; Senecio his sworn comrade. I have played housebreaker and looker on to him these eight years, and helped to save his life a score of times from injured husbands and common fellows . . .

*Sce.* You do not stand with him as you did.

*Seº.* Nay, nor you.

*Qu.* And he hath made verses on me, which he will recite in all company when I am present.

*Seº.* 'Tis that long-nosed cad Vatinius who hath undermined me.

*Sce.* And all of us. We are put down by a coarse pig.

*Qu.* He hath no true wit, no true humour.

*Sce.* The commoner a man is now, the better will he like him.

*Seº.* It used not to be so: he was once thick with me.

*Sce.* He hath sunk to depths.

*Qu.* With his acting and singing.

*Seº.* I believe 'twas he set fire to the city. I would the earthquake had swallowed him!

*Qu.* Well, I'll not be civil to his buffoon any longer.

*Seº.* A gentleman must draw the line somewhere.

*Sce.* Hark, then! Shall we unite in some plan of lordly revenge?

*Seo.* I care not; I'd as lief run him through and have done with it.

*Sce.* Are you in earnest? Mean you what you say? Would you join the patriots?

*Seo.* I care not.

*Qu.* Could we not raise a quarrel between Tigellinus and Vatinius?

*Sce.* Poison the brutes both.

*Seo.* All three of 'em, damn 'em!

*Qu.* Hush thou! here they come.

*Enter Nero, Tigellinus and Vatinius.*

*NERO.*

Ha! Here's my Quintian! 725
The pale Parnassian reptile, that hath ne'er
Moistened his leathery tongue in Hippocrene . . .
Nay, laugh not so immoderately, I fear
Your sides may split.

*TIGELLINUS.*

O no, thou god of the world,
Thou hast practised them too well.

*Qu.* And I, your majesty,
Am proud to move your jovial lips to smile.

*VATINIUS.*

We all believe it, while thy writhing grin
Makes us such sport.

*Qu.* (*aside*). Curse on this ugly brute!
*Ner.* Mind him not, Quintian; we are in good spirits.
We have worked all night like firemen, and saved the palace
If not the city. Ha! Senecio, tell us,
How stands it with thy house?
*Seº.* Permit me, sire,
To thank you for the imperial favour shewn
To my poor dwelling.
*Ner.* Thank Vatinius:
'Twas his idea.
*Seº.* Then, sir, I thank thee humbly,— 740
(*Aside.*) Till I can kill thee.
*Vat.* The emperor and I
Are glad to serve you; we are very free
To all the race.
*Ner.* 'Tis true:—Senecio,
Thou wilt remember well the merry nights,
When I and thou and Otho inaugurated
My reign with freaks of license: since that time
What steps we have made! I laugh when I recall
Those timorous revellings in the dark, and how
'Twas deemed a scandal Cæsar should be seen
Horse-racing. What misgivings when I first
Opened my circus on the Vatican!
But what applause! Then I saw Rome was with me,

Nor ever have doubted since: in other games
Outrunning popularity, till now,
—My thanks to Tigellinus—there's scarce one
Of all the noblest houses that can brag
It hath not sent some actor to the stage,
Or wrestler to the theatre: and I crowned
My triumph in Naples, when ye saw, ye heard,
Ye applauded.—Would it be believed that when
I came to the throne I might not, in my palace,
Sing my own song at supper?

*Seo.* Glorious Cæsar,
The Gods deny you nothing.

*Tig.* Thyself a god,
By destiny their peer.

*Vat.* Perfect Apollo!
In music equal, and in medicine . . . (*Acts taking poison*).

*Tig.* (*hastily*). Above all gods in this, that full success
Attests thy wisdom.

*Ner.* Well, and is't not sense
To seek for happiness the natural way?
Not by the notions of philosophers,
Who fashion theoretic right and wrong
From books; or if they judge mankind at all,
Judge by themselves, who are unlike the rest,
Scarce human. 'Tis the soundest principle
To follow nature; and what nature is

I well perceive. I judge all by myself:
The appetites are universal gifts:
Cæsar will never stoop to flatter Cæsar
By such pretence of difference, nor withhold
From others what himself loves. I believe
That no man in the world worth calling man
Is what philosophers term pure and good;—
Nor woman either. All would gratify
The strong desires of nature, and all shall,
While I am emperor.

*Tig.* Blessed be the god,
Who first named thee for rule.

*Sce.* We all admire.

*Ner.* Is it not sense?

*Tig.* 'Tis commonsense.

*Vat.* I wonder
None ever thought of it before.

*Ner.* Tut! fool;
That is the greatness: 'tis the common thing
For man to beat about. True genius
Is but simplicity: all great inventions
Seem first devices.

*Tig.* 'Tis a revolution.

*Ner.* Just so: in ethics as in politics.
I let the world wag as it will; and if
The world mistake its will, then I am Cæsar

To wag it.

*Vat.* Here's a flaw, good wag; you judge
The appetites of all men by your own:
The standard is too high.

*Ner.* We'll see to that;
By one experiment I'll strangle doubt.
This is my plan. I mean to hold a fête,
Say at Agrippa's pool:—the folk will need
Some such diversion when the fire is o'er:—
Thither I'll draw all Rome, with novel shows,
Sea-fights and monsters; round about the water,
Along the bank, I shall have wine-booths set,
Brilliant with luxury and enticement, wine
Gratis; and to all comers night and day
They shall stand open. Now I'll have these booths
Kept by the Roman ladies:—that's my plan.
They shall have license, everything permitted
But interference. We will watch our Trojans,
How they conduct themselves.

*Vat.* This is simplicity.

*Ner.* (*aside to Tig.*). And mark the disaffected.

*Tig.* (*aside*). Here's a trap
To catch all but the vermin.

*Sce.* A grand invention.

*Ner.* The details, my good master, are for you:
Our three friends here may help.

*Sce.*, *Seº. and Qu.* (*bowing*). Our humble thanks.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ner.* (*to Servant*). What is it?

*SERVANT.*

Lord Seneca is in attendance, sire.

*Tig.* (*to Ner.*). Send the old man home to his wife.

*Ner.* What can he come for?

*Vat.* Is't not the hour for lessons?

*Ner.* Now what say you
To have him in, and make him of your council
For the ordering of the fete? (*To Serv.*) Go shew him here. [*Exit Servant.*

*Tig.* (*aside to Nero*). Jest not with this man, Cæsar; Thrasea and he
Are your worst enemies.

*Ner.* Mighty enemies!

*Tig.* If there were no pretenders.

*Ner.* What do you mean?

*Tig.* (*apart with Nero*). My only pleasure is thy service, Cæsar:
If 'tis thy will that Tigellinus die,
I'll be thy sacrifice and welcome death.
The mob shall tear me, as they tore Sejanus,
And tread my mangled corpse on Tiber's steps:

But pardon Nature's shudderings, they come
At sound of these men's names.
*Ner.* Why, know you not
I am reconciled with Thrasea, since I put
His motion to the senate? While he lets me
Go my way, he goes his.
*Tig.* And Seneca?
*Ner.* Pooh!
*Tig.* Cæsar said well these men were not to fear,
If there were no pretenders.
*Ner.* What pretenders?
*Tig.* Sylla and Plautus are the first to name.
*Ner.* Both are retired from Rome.
*Tig.* And whither, Cæsar?
Mark you that Sylla is retired to Gaul,
Fire to the tinderbox: those doughty legions
Forget not how they crossed the Rubicon.
And where is Plautus? close by Corbulo,
Whose army is a créature of díscipline,
To serve him as his fingers . . .
*Ner.* Corbulo, now! my prince of generals,
Rome's trusty dexter arm.
*Tig.* Trust not that giant!
Nature packed not his mighty body full
Of intrepidity for nought. I well
Remember when I sat by him at supper,

The day he took his baton; how his triumph
Was undisguised; and whén Cæsar was mentioned—
You happed to have won a horse-race . . .

*Ner.* And what said he?

*Tig.* No word, else had I told it; he but hemmed:
But the couch shook. In his big iron chest
A thunder rumbled, such as Jove might make
If he found Juno faithless.

*Ner.* Ha, ha, ha!
He'll crunch us, think you, master? But this Sylla
Is poor as a rat: and Plautus, if he is wealthy,
Lives moderately.

*Tig.* Poor men are poor in scruples:
And rich men that live moderately, be sure,
Hide some rich purpose.

*Ner.* Had these men a purpose,
It would be bruited.

*Tig.* It is bruited.

*Ner.* Ha! 861
That's so?

*Tig.* 'Tis also hoped that, being a pair,
The one may fight the other and both be slain.

*Ner.* That is a trouble we can spare them, master:
That were a pity.—I thank you, Tigellinus:—
Take you the order for their deaths; but mind,
Secretly, secretly. Here's Seneca.

*Enter Seneca.* (*Scevinus, Senecio and Quintian still stand aside.*)

*Tig.* (*aside*). Two of my foes wiped out; now, Mister Seneca,
I take you next.

*Ner.* Good Seneca, what wouldst thou?

*SENECA.*

Cæsar, I ask
A private interview.

*Ner.* 'Tis private here:
This is my privy-council.

*Vat.* Rome's triumvirate.
Ha, ha! we rule the world! (*Tableau.*)

(*Gesturing.*) Come, trust thy secret
In Cæsar's ear, my lord.

*Seo.* (*aside to Sce.*). Let us make up
To Seneca by going out.

*Sen.* As Cæsar wills.

*Sce.* (*to Nero*). Cæsar's august permission!
We are not stoics.

*Ner.* I understand you, sir:
You may withdraw.

*Sce., Seo. and Qu.* Our humble thanks.

[*Exeunt, bowing separately to Nero and Seneca.*

*Ner.* Now we are private.

*Sen.* If your majesty

Will lend me attention, I will put my business
Shortly.

*Ner.* I shall not interrupt.

*Vat.* Nor I; 880

Unless I snore. (*Sits.*)

*Sen.* 'Tis fourteen years, Cæsar, since I was first
Chosen your guide; and for eight years and more
You have governed the empire not without my aid.
Through all wh time your kindness hath heaped ón me
So many dignities and so much wealth,
That nothing wants to my felicity
Save some curtailment of it.—I can allege
Precedents for my conduct: the divine Augustus,
Who was your great-great-grandfather, permitted
Marcus Agrippa to withdraw himself
To Mitylenè and a private life:
Mæcenas too he let abide in Rome,
As in a foreign country, at his ease;—
Whereof the one had served in all his wars,
The other toiled at home; and each grown rich
With presents answerable to their high deserts.
As for myself, what I have done to merit
Your prodigal favour,—being but a student,
A teacher, a philosopher,—I say not: 900
But being enriched, it comforteth my mind
'Twas not for me to strive against your gifts.

Both of us, sire, have filled our measure, you
In giving all a prince should give a friend,
I taking what a friend might from a prince.
But now, sire, in my journey of life grown old,
The business of my riches burdens me.
And 'tis by envy augmented; which if you
Be set above the sting of, yet 'tis known
What curse to peace it is. Wherefore I pray,
Let me retire. I crave your helping hand
To ease me of my wealth: that I restore
Whence first I had it, to yourself: receive it,
I pray you, as your own. You, in your flower,
May serve your generation, and permit
Your old friends to betake themselves to rest.
'Twill be your praise, sire, to have enriched such men
As could live happy in a mean estate.
*Tig.* (*half aside*). There's something behind this.
*Ner.* (*to Tig.*). Silence, I bid!
(*To Sen.*) If, Seneca, I am able out of hand
To meet thy long premeditated speech
With equal answer, that I owe to thee,
And thine instruction.—First thou didst allege
Maecenas and Agrippa: but from them
Divine Augustus took not back their wealth;
Which if they won in danger, yet I doubt not
Thy weapons and thy hand would not have wanted

Had I had need of them. But what I needed
That gavest thou; such reason and good counsel
As shall abide with me while my life lasteth.
Those goods material, which thou hadst of me,
Are liable to perish; and I am shamed
That thou, who art the first in my affection,
Art not first also in wealth:—nay, there be slaves
Own more than thou:—and for thine age, I know
Thou'rt lusty for thy years, and able well
To enjoy thy wealth and its commodities.
Keep thy rewards still, and still do us service:
If slipperiness of youth be overprone
To what it should not, thou mayst draw us back;
And our unseemly and unruly zeal
Temper with kind advice. Harked I to thee,
'Tis not thy moderation we should hear of,
Nay, nor thy ease, shouldst thou forsake our service:
Rather my covetousness and thy fear
Would be in all men's mouths. 'Twould ill beseem
Such a philosopher as thou, at cost
Of thy friend's infamy to win thy comfort.
*Tig.* Hear, hear! 'Tis well said, Cæsar!
*Vat.* Admirable!
But somewhat senecal.
*Ner.* Embrace me, Seneca.
Let us be friends.

*Vat.* Ye gods! I shall be jealous.
Me too, my lord.
*Sen.* If, Cæsar, in this embrace
Power kissed philosophy, 'twere well with both.
*Ner.* I have my own philosophy to kiss;
Be thou content with thine.
*Sen.* Nay, the wise man
Is so convinced of truth, he seeks to impart it.
*Ner.* I would impart my wisdom unto thee.

(*A Messenger enters and speaks to Tigellinus, who goes out with him.*)

*Sen.* Alas! all schools alike spew out your doctrines,
Zeno or Epicurus.
*Ner.* That is because
You all agree to teach what none believes,
That pain and misery and death are nothing,
But goodness all-sufficient. Tell me, Seneca,
Can a good man be happy on the rack?
*Vat.* Not if the rack be good.
*Sen.* Such questions, Cæsar,
Have their fit time and place. I came to offer
My wealth and counsel both; you refuse both,
And let your fool mock me.—Knows he not whom
Ill manners hurt, that thus he wounds his master?
*Ner.* And better have no manners than be made,

As thou, of manners only. Thou affectest
Insensibility; thy pompous maxims
Of wordy wisdom thou wouldst pass for strong
Because they are harsh, generous because inflated.
Thy rhetoric is like a mouldy cake;
I have eaten to loathing of it: I would no more.

*Sen.* Look for no more. That speech delivers you.
Whether my words are false and empty bubbles
There's nought to show, but 'twill appear the day
When life must answer for it:—The condition,
Cæsar, I accept, and do not fear the judgment.

[*Bows to Nero and exit.*

*Re-enter Tigellinus excitedly.*

*Tig.* My house is burning, Cæsar!

*Ner.* Well! if it be?
By all the gods, vex me not now.

*Tig.* My house!

*Ner.* And what's thy house, curse it? when half the city
Was burned to the ground, wert thou not cool? why now
Fume for thy house?

*Tig.* Cæsar, the Vatican!

*Ner.* The Vatican!

*Tig.* You may see it from the windows.

*Ner.* (*going to window*). Then Rome will all be burned.

*Tig.* (*aside*). And by thy foes.
When the wind was in the south, they fired the south:
Now it hath changed, they fire the north.
*Ner.* (*returning*). 'Tis true.
I can do nó móre: it must búrn.
*Tig.* What, sire,
To tell the captains? May they use discretion
To pull down?
*Ner.* Bid them change the wind, man: bid them
Snow from the south. Wóod must búrn; when 'tis burnt,
I will rebuild in stone. Go: tell them that!
Go, sir! Stay: hark! Have supper laid to-night
On the palace roof, music beneath, and ladders
Outside for the attendance. [*Exit Tig. and Vat.*
If Rome must burn,
Well, let me see it. (*Goes to window.*)

*Enter Poppæa.*

*POPPÆA.*

Ah, Nero, Nero! Rome will all be burned.
Canst thou do nought?
*Ner.* Nothing. Come watch it with me.
What are my spectacles to this? The gods
Burn at my feet the capital of the world,
'Tis done for me to look on.
*Pop.* Hast thou a heart?

*Ner.* There is no mischief, love, I am not a match for.
Rome is a second Troy, but when Troy burned
None built it up; but I will rebuild Rome:
Its name shall be Neropolis.

*Pop.* Vain thou art!

*Ner.* Eh! wouldst thou have it Poppæapolis?

*Pop.* I would not jest to think of all the misery,
These homeless thousands . . .

*Ner.* Seneca hath taught me
The good man cannot suffer, and the bad
Deserves ill-fortune.

*Pop.* Woe to me! alas,
That e'er I loved thee! one day too shall I
Taste of thy scorn.

*Ner.* Nay, love; thy will's my law.
Tell me what I shall do.

*Pop.* If thou didst love me
Thou wouldst not suffer Acte in the palace.

*Ner.* Acte! what's she to do with it now? and yet
If that's thy sorrow, she shall go to-day.
Send the witch hither.

*Pop.* And never to return.

*Ner.* Send her at once. I promised thee.

[*Exit Poppæa.*

See how
'Tis private pleasure that she seeks, nought else:

And Seneca the same. That's the true fire,
That burns unquenchable in all human hearts.
Let it rage, and consume the rotten timbers
Of old convention, the dry mouldering houses
Of sad philosophy, that in their stead
I may build up the free and ample structure
Of modern wisdom. Ay, and let Rome burn.
Blow, wind, and fan the flames till all's consumed;
That out of full destruction may arise
The perfect city of my reconstruction,
Beautiful, incombustible, Neronic;
Good out of ill: or rather there's no ill:
'Tis good's condition, cradle: 'tis good itself.
But now for Acte, my Acte: poor little Acte!
That bearest all so patiently; the insult
And domineering scorn, which this fine lady,
Whom for her beauty I have made my empress,
Pours on thy head! Thou shalt have full protection:
I cannot give it here, but I can send thee
To those who hate thy rival, and for that
Will cherish thee. Thy rival! rob me of thee!
Why, there's no clown in my subservient world,
No drudge of lot the vilest, but may smile
Secure in tyranny of one fair province,
Where young love first campaigned, the tender trust
Of a devoted woman: and shall Cæsar

Throw up this allmen's joy? nay, here the heart rules:
Who aims at thee wounds me.

*Re-enter Poppæa with Acte.*

I thank thee, love; now leave us. Hither, Acte!

(*Poppæa goes out, and is seen to hide where she can be seen by the audience, and can overhear.*)

*ACTE.*

*Act.* Cæsar sent for me.

*Ner.* My sweetest, dearest girl: my only pleasure.
I have ill news for thee.

*Act.* Nought can seem ill
Told me by Nero.

*Ner.* Acte, thy noble Cæsar
Is sometimes sad.

*Act.* Ah, 'tis the fire: thou'rt sorry
For thy poor folk. Would I had strength to cheer thee,
If thou didst send for this.

*Ner.* No: but to see thee
Doth comfort me. It comforts me to tell thee
I am not happy.

*Act.* Let the happiness
Which thy love gives me, turn to thee again.

*Ner.* Acte, I think, I know, Acte, that thou
Art the only one in the world that truly loves me.

*Act.* I wish it were no crime to wish I were.

Yet I would have all love thee, since I know
None can as I.
*Ner.* And none hath loved so long:
Thou wert my first delight.
*Act.* Did Cæsar send
To tell me this bad news?
*Ner.* Nay, but I love to tell it:
Now for the bad. Hark: thou must leave the palace:
Poppæa is jealous, and the day draws near
When she and I must solemnize our nuptials:
Rome needs an heir.
*Act.* I am not jealous of her,
If Cæsar love me; for I know that Cæsar
Cannot be bound like other men.
*Ner.* 'Tis true:
And I can send thee too where they will love thee;
To Silia's house; thou wilt be happier there.
*Act.* I think so.
*Ner.* This is not dismissal.
*Act.* Nay.
*Ner.* 'Tis needful for thy sake.
*Act.* I know that Nero
Will not love Acte less, when she is away
From his dislikes.
*Ner.* Ah, pretty sweet, thou know'st
My secretest heart. Come, I will write a letter

For thee to take to Silia. Come! (*The fire brightens.*)
*Act.* (*turning*). O, Nero,
The fire, the fire! I am frightened.
*Ner.* Hide thine eyes
And think not of it.
*Act.* Nay, but I can hear it,
And smell the smoke.
*Ner.* It shall not hurt thee, darling:
And Silia's house lies down beyond the Tiber,
Far from the flames. Come, sweetest, thou shalt sit
Beside me while I write the letter. Come!
I treasure thee 'bove all I have. Fear not!

[*Exeunt Nero and Acte. Poppæa comes out from where she was hid. The fire rages.*

*Pop.* Accursed wretch! I knew it: she is thy wife,
And I thy harlot. Yet I can dissemble—
I can dissemble too—I, sanctified
By long devotion to the Queen of heaven,
Shelter too well thy godless head. I live
To reign when thou art dead. Vain, hideous fool!
Whose heart not murder scathes nor fire can scare,
Proof by self-evil against all outer evil:
There is one mischief that thou'rt not a match for,
The hate of thy bed-fellow. I shall be avenged.

(*There is at the end of this act such a tableau of fire as*

*the stage machinery will allow of. The fire is first seen thro' the windows when Tigellinus sends Nero to the window at line* 986. *At Acte's speech, 'Nero, the fire!' it is very bright: and its climax is during Poppæa's last speech.*)

# ACT · III

## SCENE · 1

*A burned street in Rome: night.*

*THRASEA.*

IN these burned streets I wander like a ghost:
Rome is no more: O see, my memoried Rome,
My senatorial city is burned and gone!
The city of Camillus, whose abrupt
And tortuous streets my ancestors have threaded,
Here going about a tower of Servius,
Here an Etruscan temple of carved wood,
Here by some patriot tribune's gabled home:
All gone, as the free spirit that made it, gone:
And I, like this old beam, in vain escaped
The burning, shall be cast out, nor find place
In the new Rome that Cæsar promises,
O'erlaid with perfected monotony,
The textbook ornaments of shallow taste,
Imperial gewgaws.—What poet was it said
That Desolation was a beautiful thing?
What parricidal spirit? To cut down

And burn the gnarl'd trunk of a thousand years,
And plant the trifling shoot of one gay summer
Rootless in the ground. (*Cries heard.*) What noise is this?
Some wretched Christian, that in blind revenge
The maddened people sacrifice.

*Enter the mob carrying off Clitus—Epicharis following.*

*MOB.*

Burn him! To the Vatican! to the Vatican! Burn him!

*EPICHARIS.*

Pity, pity, pity, sirs! He is guiltless, indeed he is guiltless. He is my brother.

*Thr.* Stay, ye mad fools! To what detestable,
Forbidden crime of hellish witchcraft haste ye!

*Mob.* Here's another. He's a Christian. Seize him!

*Thr.* Hands off, fools! I am Thrasea.

*Mob.* Thrasea! 1130

*Thr.* Are ye Romans?

*Citizen.* 'Tis Nero's order.

*Ep.* (*kneeling to Thrasea*). O sir, save thou my brother.

*Cit.* If thou wert Thrasea, man, thou wouldst not hinder us from punishing them that fired the city.

*Mob.* On! on!

*Another Cit.* Nay, nor let any Christian woman touch thee.

*Mob.* To the Vatican! on! (*Going.*)

*Thr.* Fools, I am Thrasea, and I bid you stay.

*Mob.* Burn him, burn him! [*Exeunt Mob, etc.*

*Thr.* Stay! Are ye men?

*Ep.* O sir, 'tis my brother, my brother Clitus; save him!

*Thr.* What can I do? Alas, (*calls*) stay! stay! (*To Ep.*) Thou seest. [*Exeunt running.*

*Enter Lateranus and Flavus.*

*LATERANUS.*

This is the only way. The Fabian street
Is blocked with red-hot ashes.

*FLAVUS.*

Where's this Natalis?

*Lat.* He should be here; we must wait for him.

*Fla.* You trust him, sir?

*Lat.* Yes.

*Fla.* And Piso?

*Lat.* Certainly.

*Fla.* It is hard, sir, for a man like me, to trust a man like Piso. I yield to the choice of my betters, and the vote of the majority. I would not split the party. Yet I wish we had persuaded Seneca!

*Lat.* So do I, and it cost him a pang to refuse. 'Twas only Thrasea's opinion that overweighted him.

*Fla.* Priscus ruined us.

*Lat.* There's no choice for us now; and I doubt

not we can make Piso emperor. He hath a wider following than Seneca. But when we have set him up, 'twill be in the power of any to pull him down.

*Fla.* And then Seneca: why not Seneca then?

*Lat.* Hush! who comes?

*Fla.* 'Tis Rufus.

*Enter Rufus.*

*RUFUS.*

Good evening, gentlemen; go you to Petronius'?

*Fla.* We do, general. 1171

*Lat.* We wait for Natalis.

*Ruf.* Flavus, I'm glad of thee; hast thou heard of any new adherents?

*Fla.* Too many, general: and not the least some of Cæsar's bosom friends.

*Ruf.* Who are they?

*Fla.* There's Scevinus, hot as fire, who drags with him Senecio and Quintian, with one or two more filibustering fellows.

*Ruf.* The household contingent should help us when we come to close quarters.

*Fla.* If they are to be trusted.

*Ruf.* If a man cannot be trusted to hate Nero for a week or ten days, there's little to reckon on in this world.

*Lat.* Here is Natalis.

*Enter Natalis.*

*NATALIS.*

All's well. Piso is at Petronius's.

*Ruf.* Hath he consented to head our party?

*Nat.* Yes, believe me. But you will find him cautious and delicate in speaking of it.

*Fla.* If he speak not, how shall we trust him? He may turn on us.

*Nat.* My life for yours; my assurance; what oath you will . . .

*Ruf.* We know, Natalis, thou art a man of honour,
One that would not deceive us, wert thou not
As heartily with us as I know thou art.

*Nat.* I am much hurt that Flavus questions Piso.

*Ruf.* He knows not, sir, the perfect intimacy
'Twixt Piso and thee. For my part, I should think
Piso unreliable, if I should find him
Hasty and indiscreet in such a matter.

*Fla.* I use but the same caution.

*Nat.* I do not blame you:
But be assured he is won.—My part is done.
Go you and prosper. Farewell, sirs. (*Going.*)

*All.* Farewell. [*Exit Natalis.*

*Ruf.* 'Tis good, now let us to Petronius'. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE · 2

*The previous scene withdraws, showing a supper-room in the house of* PETRONIUS. *Slaves removing the last of the feast.* PETRONIUS, PISO, LUCAN, SCEVINUS, SENECIO, *and* QUINTIAN. *Three places are empty.*

*PETRONIUS (to Piso).*

That's the last dish, my lord: a little banquet
Of fruit remains, and, best of all my supper,
Three jars of Otho's wine.

*PISO.*

Ha! merry Otho,
Become a man of affairs. Drink we to him
And Lusitania.

*LUCAN (rising excitedly).*

A toast with Otho's name!
Republican integrity!

*Pet.* What a fuss,
Lucan, you make, because a gentleman
Is honest. What else could you expect of Otho?

*SENECIO.*

When, too, there's nought worth stealing in his province.

*Pis.* (*to Petr.*). You, sir, would underrate high qualities,
Being proved in them yourself. Bithynia
Praises you still, though Rome forgets your zeal
In the grace of your retirement. Will you never
Mix in affairs again?

*Pet.* Nothing could tempt me.
The very thought of travelling wearies me,
And the occupation of the mind in matters
That any clerk is fit for.—Yet I praise
The world and all its fret: its vanity,
Advertisement, vulgarity and dirt
Are precious for one thing; they make retirement
Positive joy. Blest are the gods who sit
On changeless seats. I think they framed the world
That they might look upon it and rejoice
They lived not in it: that's its use to me.

*Luc.* True, as Rome says, Petronius, thou art steeped
In gross epicurism.

*Pet.* Bravo, stoic!
I may be what men say: yet very few
Are what they show the world: there's a screw-twist
In every mind. It is the sensuous man
Follows asceticism: the passionate man
Who is practised in reserve. Why *Know thyself*,
Unless to hide thyself? Look at the houses

Of our philosophers: the epicurean,
Who holds the happiness of life depends
On small accessories, lives in discomfort:
The stoic, he who says all outward matters
Concern him not a pin, orders his home
With scrupulous care; however nice your taste,
There's not a better host.

*QUINTIAN.*

You'd tell us then
You set no store by elegance and culture.

*Pet.* Eh! I' may bé an exception, sir: and yet
I'd have you think I most love elegance
Where 'tis most rare and out of reach of the world.
I'd not without reserve praise Lucan's style
In poetry.

*SCEVINUS.*

Nor his matter.

*Sc.* Yes, his matter,
Where he laments the fall of the republic;
*'But if the fates could find no other way*
*For Cæsar to succeed'* . . . what was't he said?

*Qu.* *'All crimes and horrors we with joy regard,*
*Since thou, O Nero, art our great reward.'* (*Laughter.*)

*Luc.* Let that be read with what I have written since.
What thinkest thou, Senecio, of the days

When thou wert Nero's darling? If what thou didst
Be as well condoned by what thou goest to do,
As what I wrote shall be by what I write,
Thou'lt be a hero.

*Sce.* Hear, hear!

*Pet.* (*who has motioned the slaves out*). Really, sirs,
You grow obscure.

*Pis.* Explain.

*Sce.* Ay, speak your mind.

*Luc.* I ask then, is Senecio still content
To share in Nero's deeds?

*Seo.* Nay, I abjure them.

*Luc.* (*coming to him*). Patriot, I take thy hand!

*Sce.* And I.

*Qu.* And I.

*Luc.* Ye too abjure the bloody tyrant's guilt?
Would ye see Rome free, let us make an oath
By black Styx, and invoke the gods of crime!

*Pet.* Hey-day! here's tinsel!—Let me refill your cup,
Piso; the gold mellows this ruby juice, 1271
As music comforts poetry, and the eye
Assists the palate (*pouring*).

*Luc.* Is't not true, Petronius,
Thou dost hate Nero too? Thou hast held aloof
From all his crimes. Thou sippest an exile's wine,
Thou laughest and art comfortable: ah! man,

Stop well thine ears with luxury, lest thou hear
The shrieks in Cæsar's garden, where men burn
To light his revels up.
*Seo.* Ay, burned alive,
Because he saith they burned the city,—and he
Did it himself: would he were burned.
*Qu.* I heard him
Whisper to Tigellinus, 'I had liefer
'Twere all burnt than a little; help it, master!'
And so it was.—
*Pet.* I have come to see the purpose of this supper.
(*To Piso*) The company, my lord, was gathered here
By Fænius Rufus: he and other two
Have disappointed me . . . My lord, I see
My house was chosen for security.
I'll take it as a compliment: you are welcome
To all but my attention. Ha! I think
Here be the others.—(*Letting in Rufus, Lateranus and Flavus.*) Welcome, my lords!
*Ruf.* I fear we are late, Petronius.
*Pet.* Make excuse
To my most honoured guest. (*They bow to Piso.*)
*Pis.* Ye are come in time
To share the best of wine.
*Pet.* Pray serve yourselves:
I go to close the door 'gainst listeners.

*Ruf.* (*to Luc.*). Ye have broached the business?
*Luc.* (*to Ruf.*). Yes. (*Motioning.*)
*Ruf.* Nay, I'll sit here,
And fill my cup. (*Sitting.*)
*Pis.* And you too, sirs, be seated.
*Ruf.* (*pouring*). I saw a sight as I came here: the mob
Dragging some wretched Christian to be burned.
And all the while his sister ran beside,
With her vain anguish heightening their fury:
And he!.. believe me, I never saw a man
In all my life look better pleased.—I quaff
To Piso.
*All* (*toasting*). Piso! Piso!
*Ruf.* And what saith
Calpurnius Piso?
*Pis.* How, general?
*Ruf.* You consent?
*Pis.* Consent to what?
*Luc.* Speak, Rufus.
*Lat.* Let the general
Make our proposals to his lordship.
*All.* Hear, hear! (*Petronius returns.*)
*Ruf.* My lords and gentlemen, since I am chosen
To expound the common thought... It sprang at first,
I think, of the earthquake: seeing Cæsar's life
So near extinguished, as it was, at Naples,

It came into our minds that no provision
Was made for the succession; which neglect,
In case of accident, might cause disturbance,
And saddle us with an upstart. We agreed
To choose our Cæsar; but, to shield ourselves,
Would sound him privately.
*Pis.* My noble friends,
Ye are justified by circumstance: I share
Your fears, and was acquainted with your purpose.
But, ere I stand committed to your party,
What are their names? Have you them writ?
*Luc.* No, no.
We write no names.
*Pis.* Who be they?
*Ruf.* You see us here.
There are besides, my tribunes Statius Proximus
And Granius Silvanus: my centurions
Scaurus and Paullus. There's Sulpitius Asper,
And Julius Tugerinus, Martius Festus,
Proculus, a whole list,—Munatius Gratus,
Vulcatius Avaricus . . .
*Pis.* And the consul
Vestinus?
*Ruf.* Nay.
*Pis.* Thrasea and Priscus?
*Ruf.* No.

*Pis.* We lack the senatorials then: perhaps
Seneca is with us?

*Ruf.* Nay, nor he, my lord.

*Pis.* You mentioned Proculus: doth Proculus
Bring all the navy?

*Ruf.* Nay, our Proculus
Is not Volusius.

*Pis.* Nor the navy either!

*Sec.* I know the Admiral, my lord: let me
Sound him, if he hangs back.

*Fla.* No hangers-back.

*Ruf.* Your name, my lord, when we may mention it,
Is all-sufficient.

*Pis.* I give not my name
Till Nero is dead.

*Fla.* That will be soon.

*Sce.* Three days.

*Pis.* Indeed! how know you?

*Sce.* Here I show you a sword
I have whetted for the deed.

*Fla.* Eh, sir! and who
Named thee?

*Sce.* Myself to Capitolian Jove
Offered myself and weapon.

*Fla.* And what, I pray,
Said Jupiter?

*Pet.* Peace, peace! Here in my house
Let me be chairman.——
I'll ask Scevinus first to state his plan.
*Fla.* Yes, state it, sir.
*Sce.* I would set fire to his house,
And stab him as he hurried to and fro.
*Pet.* Enough of fire. The palace is already
Half-burned, and what remains of it is prospectively
Lord Piso's.—Subrius Flavus, what's your scheme?
*Fla.* I'd kill him when he is singing on the stage,
In face of all the people, a sacrifice
To his Greek Apollo.
*Pet.* Not ill thought of, sir;
But who's to do it?—Well, Senecio?
*Sen.* Why fix the time or place? Let all here swear
That the first one of us who can approach him
Shall stab him to the heart.
*Ruf.* Yes, and be killed for it.
'Tis rare that Cæsar goes unguarded now.
*Luc.* You bid us sacrifice our lives, but I
Would gaze, like Cassius, on my glorious deed.
*Pet.* Then, Lucan, have you a plan?
*Luc.* I should propose
To leave the deed to Rufus: he commands
The needful force.
*Pet.* Well, Rufus?

*Ruf.* 'Tis not easy,
As Lucan thinks: and if he escape our swords,
'Tis death to us all There is but one way free
Of personal risk.—If my lord would invite him
To an entertainment at his house at Naples,
We might be sure of him.

*Pis.* (*rising*). What! Good Heavens, General!
Take you me for a Jew? An entertainment!
My house!

*Pet.* Hear, hear!

*Pis.* Rufus, and all my friends,
Hear me. While Nero lives, my life's in danger:
Yet will I never move to take him off.
If you shall choose to do it, or if he die,
I'll be your Cæsar: there's no more to say.
I leave you to consult. (*Going.*)

*Pet.* Not in my house.
As chairman I adjourn the meeting: nay,
I have done more than my duty.

*Luc.* And why, Petronius,
Wilt thou not join us?

*Pet.* Rather, I beg you each,
Whoever may be Cæsar, to remember
My innocence, and leave me to myself.

*Pis.* Why, for your very virtue I shall need you.

*Pet.* Indeed, my lord, you know me not: my habits

Are incompatible with business.
You have eaten with me now, but, late as 'tis,
Your supper is my breakfast; and while you
Go to your beds, I shall begin my day:
Like an old lion . . .

*Luc.* Or like an owl.

*Pet.* Well, sparrow,

Or like an owl, that makes his day of night,
And when men stir hies to his barn; so I:
And by this trick of time shut myself off
From half the curse of life. You little think
What charm the witching night hath for her lovers:
How her solemnity doth deepen thought,
And bring again the lost hellenic Muse
To sing from heaven: or on moonlit swards
Of fancy shadows in transfigured scene
The history of man.—Thus, like a god,
I dwell; and take the early morning cries
For calls to sleep; and from divinity
Fall to forgetfulness, while bustling day
Ravages life; and know no more of it,—
Your riot and din, the plots and crimes of Rome,—
Than doth a diver in Arabian seas,
Plunging for pearls beneath the lonely blue:
But o'er my slumbering head soft airs of dreamland
Rock their wild honey-blooms, till the shy stars

Once more are venturing forth, and I awake.
Is not that something?

*Pis.* Ha, ha! Well, good-night!
I mean good-morning. Yet ere we depart
I'll take each by the hand,—you, sir, and you,—
And let it be an earnest of my favour
In time to come: I shall remember all.
Consult meanwhile with Rufus: I shall see him,
And shall myself make ready.

*Pet.* The slaves, my lord,
Are sent away: I'll show you to the street:
Come: you shall see me undo the doors, and say
I care well for my safety. Pray keep silence.

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE · 3

*The next morning: a room in Lucan's house.*

*Enter a Servant.*

*SERVANT.*

Scarce an hour after sunrise, and two ladies for my master already. This it is to be a poet. One gives no name; the other is Thrasea's daughter, Priscus' young wife. I am to take her first: though the other looks the more pressing. (*Goes to side, and returns ushering Fannia.*) If my lady will kindly wait here a moment.

*FANNIA.*

Is your master not up?

*Serv.* He was late last night, my lady; and is now breakfasting.

*Fan.* Will he not see me?

*Serv.* Yes, my lady. [*Exit.*

*Fan.* It is then as we feared: Lucan was there.
He is one of the conspiracy of Piso,
And he was at Petronius' house last night:
I come too late.

*Enter Lucan, hurriedly.*

*LUCAN.*

Fannia, good-morning!

*Fan.* Good-morning, cousin!

*Luc.* What brings you here so early?

*Fan.* Ah! if I am not too late! My husband sent me
To save thy life.

*Luc.* (*excitedly*). What's this?

*Fan.* These were his words,
'Bid him, by all we love and hold in common,
Withdraw from the conspiracy.'

*Luc.* (*aside*). 'Tis nothing.——
(*To Fan.*). I thank thee. Take this answer to the message,
'I bid him, by the love we hold in common,
Join the conspiracy.'

*Fan.* Judge, my dear cousin,

By them that hold aloof how ill 'tis plotted.

*Luc.* Then rather win the hearts that hold aloof,
Than tamper with the movers.

*Fan.* Sir, my husband . . .

*Luc.* Thou hast the fairest star in heaven to guide thee.

*Fan.* Let him guide thee.

*Luc.* I must not hear thee, cousin.
Write down my name 'mong the tyrannicides.
I know I have thy prayers; and to say truth,
I need them: 'tis an anxious time: indeed
While we talk here, a secret messenger
Awaits me: the suspense distracts me. Excuse me! . .
Farewell! . . I must . . .

*Fan.* Ah, Lucan, Lucan!

*Luc.* Give
My loving thanks to Priscus.

*Fan.* Alas! Farewell.
May the gods aid thee! [*Exit.*

*Luc.* In sleep or action is my mind at ease:
Betwixt the two, each moment is a world
Of scared imaginations. Better suffer
One worst at once, than all the thousand tortures
The making mind invents. Who is this woman,
That I should dread her message with more fear
Than I would grant to death?

*Enter Epicharis.*

Come in! Ah, lady, I fear there's something ill?
Com'st thou from... say, bringst thou a secret message?
What is't? Ay, sit and speak.

*EPICHARIS* (*sitting*). Art thou the poet Lucan?

*Luc.* I am.

*Ep.* 'Tis well.
I bring this book. (*Giving.*)

*Luc.* Ha! a passport: from whose hand?

*Ep.* A courtier gave it to me in lieu of money.

*Luc.* (*aside*). The copy I gave to Quintian.——
Was it Quintian?

*Ep.* No, sir. Ask not his name.

*Luc.* Tell me thy message;
Or if this book is all, what is thy price?

*Ep.* Sir, I was told this book, if given to Nero,
Would be thy death. 'Tis writ by thee? 1475

*Luc.* It is.

*Ep.* Then thou dost hate him.

*Luc.* (*aside*). What should this lead to?——
Thy manner frights me, lady, not thy matter.
Who art thou, pale and breathless as the grave,
That comest thus?

*Ep.* My name is Epicharis.
Three days ago, sir, when this book was given me,
I thought to bring it back to thee, from whom

No doubt 'twas stolen, and win gold for my silence.
To-day I ask not money; but much more
I'll ask, if by this chance I have found in Rome
The man to avenge me.

*Luc.* Avenge thee? What is thy wrong?
Tremble not so.

*Ep.* Wilt thou? Art thou the man?
Dost thou hate Nero?

*Luc.* Pray, lady, be still.

*Ep.* Sir, canst thou help me?

*Luc.* If thou art wronged by Nero,
Lady, I can and will help thee.

*Ep.* And thou
Thyself too art in danger.

*Luc.* In greater danger
Than thou surmisest.

*Ep.* If all wait their turn,
Who shall be left to avenge?

*Luc.* I do not wait.
Let me beseech thee, lady, master this passion,
And tell thy grief.

*Ep.* My grief? nay, that's past telling:
There are no words for that. Yet fear not, sir;
I can be quiet while I tell my story.

*Luc.* Be comforted to know thou tellest to one,
Thy sworn ally, before thou sayst a word.

To his strong mortal anger add thy cause.

*Ep.* I shall, sir; I can. All womanly soft feeling
I have driven for ever from me; and I have sworn
A pact with tears, that I will shed not one
Till I be avenged.

*Luc.* Trust me; and tell thy wrong.

*Ep.* I live at Naples, sir; my mother keeps
The tavern where the sailors most resort.
My father died five years ago, and then
It happened that my brother, my only brother,—
Whose generous nature blamed the life of gain
That there we led,—left us, and was ere-long
Inveigled by the Christian sect. It happened
He met their leader Paulus,—whom 'twas said
Burrus protected,—for he came by Naples,
And there my brother heard him, and after had
Strange visions, and believed the end of the world
Was near, and Christ would come to reign in Rome,
And other doctrines taught by Paul; and lately,
Three days ago, he saw Paul in a dream,
Who beckoned him to Rome. Hither he came,
And I soon after him, being full of fear,
Knowing the ill-odour of his sect, and him
Inclined to boast it; and so I came. The Christians
Were seized last night, and my poor brother, sir,
Though unknown, unsuspected and unchallenged,

Gave himself up. Now all is over.

*Luc.* Thou meanest . . .

*Ep.* I could not stay him. I saw him taken. One Thrasea,

A senator, whose voice seemed powerful with them,
Joined his commands with my poor prayers in vain:
'Twas Nero's order.

*Luc.* Was he burned?

*Ep.* Ye gods,
If there be any gods; if there be Christ,
Or Zeus, or Jove, or who you will, look down,
Avenge!

*Luc.* Thou shalt be avenged.

*Ep.* I know not, sir,
Where I have been, nor how my brother suffered:
He had no fear; he welcomed death: and yet,—
Ah! what I saw! were it assured a dream,
I would not live after that dream; the memory
Would make a horror of joy. I pray to die,
Die and forget; but first live and avenge him:
I will do that: help me or show me how.

*Luc.* Can thy just hate teach thy tongue silence, lady?

*Ep.* Fear not my tongue: fear nothing: were I not brave,
Should I be alive? should I be here?

*Luc.* My secret,

That I shall tell thee, is my life. I am one
Of a conspiracy to rid the world
Of this black monster.

*Ep.* Thou art? thou art? Thou tellst me
That I may join? Alas, that I am a woman.

*Luc.* Prove now thy mastery of thyself by reasoning
In sober terms.

*Ep.* I can.

*Luc.* (*showing the book*). Who gave thee this?

*Ep.* Senecio.

*Luc.* Ha! Senecio! can it be . . .

*Ep.* Thou mayst not think it, sir, seeing me to-day:
But yesterday thou wouldst have well believed
I might have lovers.

*Luc.* . . . At Naples, at this tavern,
Hast thou acquaintance with the Admiral? 1551

*Ep.* I know him well.

*Luc.* How doth he stand towards Cæsar?

*Ep.* He hates him.

*Luc.* Yes, but would he join our party?
We have no means to sound him: this Senecio
Has taken it on himself. I did not trust him;
Now I suspect him.

*Ep.* You would win the navy?

*Luc.* 'Tis that.

*Ep.* I could approach him.

*Luc.* I think thou mayst
Bide with me here to-day; for ere we talk
Thou must have food & sleep. I shall speak with thee
More confidently then: thou art now o'erstrained.

*Ep.* I shall not sleep.

*Luc.* To the distracted heart,
To whom this life is hell, nature hath given
A perfect boon, the numbing poppy-juice:
Soothed by its gracious power thou wilt sleep well.
My mother shall attend thee: she knows all.

# ACT · IV

## SCENE · 1

*The tavern at Naples* (*as in I.* 2).

*GRIPUS, MARINERS and SENECIO.*

*GRIPUS.*

I SAY weather permitting: it's always weather permitting. 1568

*MARINERS.*

1*st Mar.* There was no weather permitting in it. I heard the Admiral say he had his orders to sail for the Adriatic, and the ships at Formiæ were to join him here last night.

*Gri.* Weather permitting.

1*st M.* No: no weather permitting. If it had been weather permitting, would they have put out in the teeth of a sou'-wester? that's what I look at.

2*nd M.* No sailor would have done it; least of all Regulus.

*Gri.* Then 'twas Cæsar's fault not to have said weather permitting.

3*rd M.* Eight firstrates: the pick of the fleet.

1*st M.* Nay, seven, mate. The Ulysses is put in for repairs.

*SENECIO.*

What is it you talk of, fellows?

*1st M.* Why, where have you been, sir? Half the fleet's ashore off Misenum.

*Seº.* Wrecked?

*Gri.* Ay, that they be.

*Enter Epicharis.*

*EPICHARIS.*

Is it true, Gripus? Is the squadron lost?

*Gri.* True enough.

*Ep.* Was the Admiral with them?

*1st M.* Regulus: 'twas Regulus at Formiæ, lady.

*Ep.* Not Proculus?

*1st M.* Nay, he's with his ships in the bay.

*Ep.* And the crews?

*2nd M.* Ther'll not be many stand up, when they come ashore.

*Ep.* Poor fellows! And whose fault was this?

*Gri.* Cæsar's, I say, lady: and none else.

*Seº.* Epicharis, see, I am returned. 1600

*Ep.* Well, I see you, sir. Have you been to Rome and back so soon?

*Seº.* Yes, my house is pulled down. But I saw the Christians burned.

*Ep.* Hark, sir; I have news for you. (*Takes him aside and speaks with him.*)

*Enter Proculus.*

*PROCULUS.*

What! a dozen of you fellows here! Up with you! be sharp, and off to the point. See if you can't be of some use. You may save a life or two yet.

*Mar.* We have no orders, my lord.

*Pro.* Where do you expect to find your orders? Go and help your mates. You may get into a scrape yourselves some day.

*Mar.* Very willing, my lord; so we be sent. (*All drain their cups standing.*)

*Pro.* Come, leave your possets.

*Mar.* Ay, ay, my lord. [*Exeunt Mariners.*

*Pro.* Epicharis, wine!

*Ep.* Gauran, my lord?

*Pro.* Yes.—And you, sir, I think are the gentleman that begged to go aboard the fleet to get clear of the earthquake. What did I tell you?

*Seo.* You did not tell me, my lord, that Cæsar ordered you to be shipwrecked. (*Epicharis serves Pro. with wine.*)

*Pro.* Well, 'twas his doing: I'll bear no blame of it. Three days ago it was Cæsar's intention to go to Greece; we must therefore be ready to meet him at Brundisium. Never had more stringent orders. Now he has forgot all about it, and gone to Rome:

and I have lost a third of the fleet for nothing. May all the gods . . .

*Ep.* The fire took him to Rome.

*Seo.* The Romans, my lord, can never spare him long: their bread depends on him.

*Pro.* Can't that old shrimper Tigellinus feed 'em on sprats?

*Seo.* Hi, hi!

*Pro.* Well, sir!

*Seo.* I shan't tell.

*Ep.* The wine will soothe you, my lord. *(Refilling his cup, she signs to Senecio, who goes out.)*

*Pro.* Thank you, lass.

*Ep.* Did Cæsar give the order himself?

*Pro.* Don't talk to me. Ha, that fellow's gone, is he? He is not one to blab?

*Ep.* How should I know, my lord?

*Pro.* What's his name?

*Ep.* Senecio.

*Pro.* Senecio, yes, of course: one of Nero's intimates: and I called Tigellinus an old shrimper: 'twould cost me my life if he heard it.

*Ep.* No man is safe. 1650

*Pro.* Nor woman either, Epicharis: guard your tongue.

*Ep.* I am a Greek, my lord.

*Pro.* What's that to serve thee?

*Ep.* Nothing truly; and yet
I have no share in Rome's reproach; I laugh
Rather to see my country's conquerors
Themselves enslaved. I have no pride in Cæsar:
Let him be a madman, one day burn his city,
The next day wreck his fleet,—poison his brother,—
Murder his mother,—behead his wife,—I care not.
Let all his courtiers be curs, and he
Sing in the theatre . . . In Greece a tyrant
Had little heart for singing; nay, at night
He slept not, thinking what undaunted spirits
Were lying wide-awake for torturing shame
Till they could kill him.

*Pro.* By Jove, thou hast a tongue!

*Ep.* And they that like it not may cut it out.

*Pro.* Drink with me, lass (*offers his cup*).

*Ep.* I would I were a Roman
But for one day.

*Pro.* I love thee for thy spirit.

*Ep.* Thou lov'st to hear the words thou dar'st not say.

*Pro.* Well, give me more.

*Ep.* Greek as I am, my lord,
And woman, were I now as near to Cæsar
As I am to you, I'd stab him to the heart.

*Pro.* I would not stay thee.

*Ep.* But thou wouldst not do it.

*Pro.* Bah! thou'rt a Greek to brag what thou wouldst do:

I am a Roman, and would do the thing
Before I spake it.

*Ep.* Yet mightst never do it.

*Pro.* Thou know'st me not.

*Ep.* Then none knows thee, my lord.
Were there a plot among the brave in Rome,
Which they should fear to break to thee, and say
We know him not, we cannot risk to sound him,
A woman might; then should they send a woman,
Some woman that thou lov'st, to learn thy mind,
What wouldst thou say?

*Pro.* Then were it time to speak.

*Ep.* The brave in Rome have plotted: I am the woman—
Their messenger.

*Pro.* What! a conspiracy?
'Gainst Cæsar's life?

*Ep.* They bid thee bring the navy.

*Pro.* Art thou in earnest?

*Ep.* I am a Greek, my lord;
And risk my life for Roman liberty.

*Pro.* What are their names?

*Ep.* The best in Rome.

*Pro.* Who are they?

*Ep.* In time I'll tell their names.

*Pro.* And what the plot?

*Ep.* In three days Cæsar will be slain: 'tis asked
Of thee that thou wilt bring thy ships to Ostia,
And seize the granaries till Rome is ours.

*Pro.* What are their names?

*Ep.* With fair security
I will tell all.

*Pro.* And what security
For me?

*Ep.* Enough, my lord, even in this risk
To well content thee.

*Pro.* Tell me the chief names.

*Ep.* When I have won thee.

*Pro.* Thou hast won me: tell.

*Ep.* In good time all.

*Pro.* What would they have me do?

*Ep.* First bring the officers whose names are here
(*Giving a paper*)
To meet me here to-night. Then I shall see
Who is to trust.

*Pro.* (*reading the paper*). Give me the names of those
Who sent thee.

*Ep.* In good time.

*Pro.* I would not harm thee.
*Ep.* Thou canst not.
*Pro.* See, Epicharis, I'll help thee
Out of this mischief. Give me up the names,
And thou shalt be informer.
*Ep.* Ah, Proculus,
Play not that part; thou that so oft in secret
Hast cursed the tyrant to me; now play not
That part; it cannot serve thee: be true, Proculus,
To the nobleness within thee, that hast not only
A heart sufficient, but in face and figure
Lookest the hero: thou that mightest stand
For a statue of Brutus, and outdo the man
As nature made him: Be thou from this day
Named with the noblest; Proculus the brave,
Who turned the tide 'gainst Nero, and delivered
Romans from shame and slavery;—or wilt thou
Be Proculus the futile; Proculus,
Who aided first infamous Anicetus
To murder Agrippina, and then perceiving
Remorseful Cæsar cast out his gross tool,
Sought to win favour of the parricide,—
And vainly tried to stay the avenger's hands,—
And sold a trustful woman whom he had loved,
On the eve of liberty?
*Pro.* That day's not come.

Look to thyself, and I will win thy safety.
To-night thou wilt set forth with me to Rome:
In two days I shall bring thee before Cæsar.
Then, if thou tell these names, thou wilt go free,
And mayst be rich. Thou canst not 'scape: be ready
In one hour hence. [*Exit.*

*Ep.* Ah, wretched Roman slave,
Thy paltry spirit hath baulked me: go thy way;
Thou knowest nought: thou'rt in my power; thou too,
If I could turn aside, shouldst bleed for Clitus:
He hated thee, condemned thee, and thou deservest.
But what care I for thee? what is't to me
That Piso be set up on Nero's throne?
Only make void that throne, only tear out
That monster from the world. As for thee, Proculus,
I know thee and can outwit thee: I have my tale
Ready, and false Senecio for my witness.
Where is Senecio?—I have yet an hour. [*Exit.*

## SCENE · 2

*A street in Rome.*

*Enter SCEVINUS, followed by NATALIS and LATERANUS.*

*SCEVINUS.*

No more, sirs: let me go. This sword shall do it.
I am sworn.

*LATERANUS.*

Stay, stay, sir! stay! be more discreet.
*Sce.* I know there's not a man among you all
Durst risk his life but I. I have made my will:
I have set my house in order. Cæsar dies,
Dies by this hand to-day.

*NATALIS.*

For heaven's sake, stay, sir!
Have patience. Piso is unprepared.
*Lat.* Scevinus,
Thou art bound to abide by and respect the voice
Of the party.—We do not choose thee.—
*Sce.* Whóm chóose ye?
*Lat.* No scheme is ready as yet. The matter needs
More judgment than thou usest.
*Nat.* And more caution.
*Sce.* Caution and judgment are for cowards. By God
I have sworn. 'Tis by this hand Cæsar shall die.
*Nat.* (*to Lat.*). We must prevent him.
*Lat.* (*to Nat.*). Shall we seize him?
*Sce.* My lords,
I thank you for your counsel. Go now to Piso,
And make him ready: I shall to the palace
To screen my purpose in some usual conduct.
To-night all will be over.—Fare-you-well. [*Exit.*

*Lat.* Come after him, Natalis: we must make
A show of yielding, and delude him gently
By mock convincement; else he'll ruin all. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE · 3

*A room in the palace. NERO and POPPÆA meeting.*

*NERO.*

Empress! the emperor of the world salutes thee,
Bows to thee.

*POPPÆA.*

And embraceth?

*Ner.* And embraceth.—
Didst thou sleep well in thy new chamber?

*Pop.* I did.

*Ner.* How doth it please?

*Pop.* 'Tis fine. It hath no fault,
Save that it lies so far from thine.

*Ner.* In that
See how I trust thee.

*Pop.* I shall need my litter
In this new palace: 'tis a morning's journey
From end to end. What distances!

*Ner.* Yes, space:
Grandeur in space: we cannot emulate

Starry distinctions and ethereal peace;
Mortal conditions hamper us . . . yet I'll teach
The world what may be done; and my new Rome
Shall stand for a type: the streets all laid out broad,
Straight and intelligible; and all the houses
Of fireproof stone from Alba and Gabii.
In four years 'twill be finished.

*Pop.* Four whole years
Of rubbish-heaps and hammering?

*Ner.* Come see
The plans in the library.

*Pop.* Would you believe
The plans of architects can cheer a woman?

*Ner.* If thou wert happy thou wouldst love to see
All that I do, and for my sake admire.
I wish that thou wert happier. Think, Poppæa,
What cause thou hast, being for thy peerless beauty
Chosen the world's Augusta. I could wish
Thou didst smile oftener.

*Pop.* Well, consider, love,
I have cause for care.

*Ner.* I wish that thou couldst sing:
Music can cheer. Dost thou remember once,
When thou wast fearful in a thunderstorm,
How I diverted thee with sprightly music?
Then I should love if, when I came to see thee,

I heard thy voice afar, and in thy chamber . . . .

(*Vatinius interrupts, entering noisily.*)

Who's there? (*Vatinius gives a note to Nero.*)
(*Reads.*) 'Proculus the admiral is come from Naples
With secret tidings; he hath a lady with him!'
(*To Vat.*) Let him in, or his tidings, or his lady,
Whichever is most secret—or all three. [*Exit Vat.*
(*To Poppæa, who is going.*) Thou needst not go, love.

*Pop.* Why! if 'tis a lady.

*Ner.* Pooh! 'tis some state affair.

*Pop.* I hate affairs. [*Exit.*

*Ner.* Marriage rúins a woman: and how quickly!
And I to lead the ape-dance, who am sworn
To rid the world of this and all its plagues! 1805

*Enter Tigellinus with Proculus and Epicharis; Vatinius following.*

*Ner.* Good-day, Lord Proculus; what brings you here?

*PROCULUS.* Forgive the intrusion, Cæsar.

*Ner.* The lady's looks
Are ample excuse. You ask leave to be married?

*Pro.* Nay, Cæsar; I accuse her.

*Ner.* Bravo! divorce?

*TIGELLINUS* (*aside to Nero*).

His story is urgent.

*Ner.* What is it?

*EPICHARIS.* Mighty Cæsar,
This is a charge 'gainst me: a foolish charge
Not worth your ear. I have a witness with me
Would make short matter of it, might he enter.

*Ner.* By all means. Why, sir, did you keep him back?
His name?

*Ep.* Senecio.

*Ner.* Good. We know him, lady.
Vatinius, fetch him in. (*Exit Vat.*) What is the charge?

*Pro.* This woman, sire . . .

*Ner.* (*interrupting*). What is thy name, fair lady?

*Ep.* Epicharis, your majesty.

*Pro.* This lady
Was known to me at Naples.

*Ner.* I understand:
Spare your excuses.

*Pro.* At a tavern.

*Ner.* Ho!
You sailors! (*Vat. re-enters with Senecio.*)
(*To Epicharis*) See your witness, lady, is come.

*Pro.* She took occasion of her intimacy
To draw me into a plot 'gainst Cæsar's life.

*Ner.* Ha!

*Pro.* Entrusted by conspirators at Rome
Three days ago to tamper with me.

*Ner.* By heaven!
And thou dost laugh? (*to Epic.*)
*Ep.* Will Cæsar hear the end?
*Ner.* (*to Pro.*). Give me the names at once.
*Pro.* I know no names,
Cæsar; she would not tell.
*Ner.* No names? and whom
Wert thou then to conspire with?
*Pro.* She would tell
Nothing of her confederates, unless
I brought together certain officers,
Whose loyalty I know suspicious.
*Ner.* Dost thou? By God,
I'll have théir names.
*Pro.* I was to sail to Rome,
And seize the granaries.
*Ner.* Enough. Now, madam;
What dost thou answer?
*Ep.* If Cæsar need an answer
To a charge so empty, 'tis enough to say
I have never been in Rome.
*Ner.* 'Tis not enough.
Didst thou speak to the Admiral in the sense
He avers?
*Ep.* I humbly crave great Cæsar's pardon
For jesting with his name.

*Ner.* Thou didst? and why?

*Ep.* Here is my witness; Lord Senecio
Will say that my story is true. Holding with him
Some talk of Proculus, I laid a wager
That I could make the Admiral believe
Anything, no matter how ridiculous:
And this we hit on. Then straight he comes in,
And if I went too far, 'twas in my fear
To lose my money.

*Ner.* Is this so, Senecio?

*SENECIO.*

'Twas so, sire; I backed the Admiral, and lost.

*Ner.* (*to Proc.*). You sailors are so clumsy. You are a fool.

*Pro.* Sire! on my life 'twas true. Twas not a jest:
She would outface me.

*VATINIUS.*

As Octavia did
That old sea-mutton Anicetus.

*Tig.* Hish!

*Ner.* First, sir,
Send me these same suspicious officers.
Meanwhile for her,—thy rank may win thy tale
So much respect,—she goes not free. (*To Tig.*) Good master,
Keep her in custody.

*Ep.* (*aside to Proculus*). Hear me! I warn thee.
Join, or be first to die!
*Pro.* Now, Cæsar, again
She invites me to conspire.
*Ner.* Come, man; she mocks thee:
She hath won the privilege. (*To Tig.*) Take her away;
But treat her well. You follow me: I go
To judge the cases argued yesterday.
No folly, Proculus, like being in earnest,
When others are all jesting.

[*Exeunt. Tigellinus with Epicharis: Proculus and Vatinius with Nero.*

## SCENE · 4

*A room in Piso's house.*

*Enter PISO with NATALIS.*

*PISO* (*at door*).

Show them in here, Natalis; I must see them.

[*Exit Nat.*

'Tis dangerous: Rufus should know better. Five,
Five of them here together! 'tis enough
To damn an innocent: mere information
By any vagabond. Why should they come?

*Re-enter Natalis with Rufus, Lateranus, Lucan, Flavus and Asper.*

Come in, my lords; come in.

*All.* Good-day, Lord Piso.

*Pis.* Your purpose, gentlemen? Ye would not come
In such a dangerous body to my house
Without great cause.

*RUFUS.*

'Tis urgency, my lord.
We have met to-day, and voted with one voice
Immediate action. That madman Scevinus
Hath taken the whole affair upon himself,
And full of mystery walks at large, parading
His self-importance; wearing on his face
The secret of our lives. You must come forward,
Or we are lost.

*Pis.* I shall not move.

*Ruf.* My lord! 1880
My lord! my lord! (*A servant has been speaking with Natalis at the door.*)

*NATALIS* (*to Piso*).

Here is another come.

*Pis.* Bring him in.—(*To Ruf.*) Nay, Rufus, I shall not move. [*Exit Nat.*
Why should you come to me? I made no promise
But this, when Nero is dead, to be your Cæsar.

*ASPER.*

The men, my lord, whose hands you grasped in faith
Need your support. A Cæsar we must have;
Stand by us or withdraw.

*Pis.* May I ask the name
Of the last speaker?

*Asp.* Asper, my lord.

*Pis.* By heaven!
Asper thou art.

*Re-enter Natalis with Senecio.*

*Nat.* Betrayal! betrayal!

*SENECIO* (*excitedly*). My lords, we are betrayed.

*All.* Betrayed!

*Pis.* Scevinus is it?

*Sec.* No. Proculus,
The Admiral. He hath brought to Nero a woman
From Naples, who was sent to gain him over.

*LUCAN* (*aside*).

Epicharis failed me!

*Pis.* A woman too!

*Ruf.* What names hath she betrayed?

*Sec.* No names at all.
She outfaced the Admiral with a lie, and I
Swore it was true.

*Pis.* Hath she not mentioned me?

*Seo.* No, my lord, none.
*Luc.* (*aside*). Well done!
*Pis.* Maybe then she knows nothing.
*Seo.* Ay, she knows:
She told me.
*Luc.* You?
*Seo.* Yes; me, sir.
*Pis.* What is her name?
*Seo.* Epicharis.
*Ruf.* Who is Epicharis?
*Pis.* Ay, who is she? how came she in the plot?
*Seo.* Lucan perhaps may know.
*Luc.* I have heard the name,
And mentioned with my uncle, the physician.
If that is what Senecio means, 'tis nought.

*FLAVUS.*

Where is she? let us see her.
*Seo.* Tigellinus
Hath her in custody.
*Ruf.* She will be questioned.
*Fla.* We must not wait.
*Pis.* Who, now, is guilty of this?
I have other evidence too that your secret
Has been ill-kept, gentlemen.—When I sent
A messenger to Seneca this morning,

He was refused admission.—Seneca knows.

*LATERANUS.*

My lords, we are all in danger: there's no time
To investigate. Act,—act ere we be lost!

*Ruf.* But how to act?

*Lat.* The plan I have always urged:
Remember, sirs, how Julius fell. To-morrow
Are the Circensian games; Nero will come:
I, under the pretence of some request,
Will kneel to him, as Cimber knelt to Cæsar;
And as I beg my boon I'll drag him down,
If one of you will slay him.

*Fla.* That will I.

*Asp.* And I.

*Sev.* Or Lord Scevinus.

*Ruf.* Better, sir,
Do without him. And I still hold my plan
The best, that Cæsar should be asked to supper:
Then nought were risked. Once more I pray Lord Piso
To save unneeded bloodshed.

*Pis.* I could not do it:
Nor were it wise, in face of the great pity
Such treachery would stir.

*Asp.* And the delay:
To-morrow is late.

*Ruf.* Then Lateranus hath it:

We adopt his disposition. You, my lord,
Must be by dawn to-morrow in Ceres' temple
Clad in imperial purple: I with my guards
Will keep the doors; and when the deed is done
Will bring you forth, and lead you through the city,
Proclaiming you with shouts.

*Pis.* Well, let it be so.
I give consent. Let nothing stop you now:
But each man learn his part and act it bravely.
Your lives are forfeit. Secrecy and despatch—
And now depart.

*Ruf.* Be you in Ceres' temple.

*Pis.* I understand. I shall await you there.
Action, Rufus, is now your only hope;
Let nothing stop you. Fail me not.

*Ruf.* Nay, trust me.

*Lat.* Bravo, Lord Piso.

*Fla. and Asp.* Hail, great Cæsar!

*Pis.* Hush!
Depart your different ways: be no more seen
Than cannot be avoided. I see none
Until to-morrow.

*All (going).* To-morrow! to-morrow! [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE · 5

*A room in the palace. Enter NERO and TIGELLINUS with a drawn sword* (R.).

*Ner.* Fury and Hell! Murder me, would he! A plot,
A damnable hellish plot! Stab me! by God,
Arrest him and fetch him hither.
*Tig.* Bethink you, Cæsar,
Now of Epicharis.
*Ner.* Ah, true, by heaven!
The impudent drab: she knew it all. Send straight
To the prison, and have her questioned. Rack and fire:
Torture truth from her.
*Tig.* I will. Whist! Cæsar, I see
The man himself.
*Ner.* Come out! he may be armed.
We'll close the doors upon him and shut him in,
Till we have got assistance. [*Exeunt hastily* (L.).

*Enter Scevinus and Quintian* (R.).

*SCEVINUS.*

How the sun shines to-day, Quintian! Great Phœbus,
The Python-slayer, smiles upon my deed.

*QUINTIAN.*

Hush! walls have ears.

*Sce.* When the gods favour a man,
They set his mind at ease: he disregards
Your fearful chances. Think you, Quintian,
'Tis the April air intoxicates me so,
And floats my head with birdlike confidence?
Is it the April morning air? Ah, no;
'Tis the air of the eve of liberty.—Is that
Not poetry, good fellow?

*Qu.* Well, they say
Occasion makes a poet of any man.

*Sce.* It pleases me to walk about the palace,
And count the columns: with my eye I measure
The carven friezes and gold roofs, and say
All this is thine, Scevinus: stretch but forth
Thy hand and take it from its master: give it
Back to the world. These busts, Hellenic statues,
All these are thine, Scevinus! Let us go
To the western court, where we may gaze on Rome.

*Qu.* Ay, if you will.

*Sce.* All this is thine, Scevinus!
Open the door!

*Qu.* 'Tis closed.

*Sce.* (*trying it*). Shut fast! 'Tis strange.
I never knew this door shut up before.

*Qu.* We can go back the same way we came in,
And round by the north corridor.

*Sce.* We will. (*Going hurriedly back to first door.*)
By God, 'tis closed too: fast. We are locked in.
*Qu.* What can it mean?
*Sce.* (*going again to the second door*). They both are fast.
*Qu.* I hear
Footsteps without.
*Sce.* Here, here! my dagger: take it.
*Qu.* Nay, curse thee, I'll not have it.
*Sce.* They will search me.
*Qu.* Throw it óut of the window.
*Sce.* (*throwing*). So!
*Qu.* They are coming.
*Sce.* By God, Quintian, I forgot. It was the dagger
That should have pierced my heart, if I was taken.
*Qu.* Brave it out. I know nothing.

*Re-enter Nero and Tigellinus preceded by Guards* (L.).

*Ner.* Ha! Quintian too, my feathery Quintian.
(*To Tig.*) What of him, master?
*Tig.* (*to Ner.*). Send him out.
*Ner.* Begone, sir:
And thank thy littleness.
*Qu.* I am Cæsar's slave. [*Exit.*
*Ner.* Now, sir, we have thee; we know all: go down,
Fall on thy knees. (*Sce. kneels.*) Confess, and tell me first
Why in the temple of Capitoline Jove

Thou didst present and dedicate a sword.

*Tig.* This sword, sir, sharpened too, and tempered freshly.

*Sce.* Most mighty Cæsar, I know not on oath
Why I am treated thus. What of this sword?

*Ner.* Is it not thine?

*Sce.* Pray let me see it near.

*Tig.* I'd like to put it, sir, where thou couldst feel
More than thou saw'st of it. Dost see it now?

*Sce.* 'Tis mine. O sacred heirloom of my house,
Left to my father by my grandfather . . .

*Ner.* Invoke not thy curst ancestors to me.

*Sce.* It hath been stolen from me: some slave, Cæsar,
Knowing the store I set by it, hath purloined it.

*Tig.* One of those thieves whom thou three days ago
Didst liberate,—when thou mad'st thy will—? We know.
Why didst thou that?

*Sce.* It is the time of year
I fix my household, and reward my servants.
And for my will, it is my habit oft
To change the disposition of my goods,
As they change, and my friends.

*Ner.* Thou hast changed thy friends,
Say'st thou, of late! As for thy change of will,
Thy little damnèd will, the estate of felons

Passes to Cæsar at their execution.

*Tig.* And why, sir, shouldst thou lay up in thy house
A store of bandages, styptics and drugs
Good for fresh wounds?

*Sce.* I did not: I pray you, Cæsar,
Who hath informed against me?

*Ner.* Question me,
Wilt thou?

*Tig.* He hath been seen, sire, with Natalis.

*Sce.* Never, I know him not.

*Ner.* Get up, sir.—Take him
To torture, till he tell.

*Sce.* Cæsar, I pray
Have me not tortured. I am innocent.

*Ner.* Villain, I'll have thee drawn out limb from limb;
And thou shalt taste at leisure from this sword
What stabbing is. Take him away.

*Sce.* Nay, Cæsar,
Have me not tortured. I am innocent.

*Tig.* Take him off, guards.

*Sce.* Indeed I am innocent.
Cæsar, Oh Cæsar! [*Exeunt Guards carrying off Scevinus.*

*Tig.* The informer Milichus, Scevinus' slave,
Saith he was with Natalis, Piso's man:
Shall I seize Piso?

*Ner.* Not yet, no, I am safe

Here in the palace. Have the city guarded,
And go first to the prison: look thyself
To the torture of Epicharis: from her
Learn all, and bring it to me here. A woman
Is delicately nerved: use thy full art
Most exquisitely.

*Tig.* She hath confessed by this:
I sent at once.

*Ner.* Return then soon.

*Tig.* I shall. [*Exit.*

*Ner.* A plot! and this contemptible Scevinus
I could almost forgive; that woman never.
She fooled me to my face, laughed as she fooled me:
A common woman! Cæsar! me! on the eve
Of being the ridicule of history:
My wisdom a mockery,—my insight,—to the end of time
Schoolboys to laugh at turning of my page,
The favourite tale to spice their dreary task.
Nero! and I who, when my very mother,
She who upraised me, dared to plot against me,
Scrupled not, I, for my world-reaching schemes
And absolute power, I scrupled not to hide
Sonship in Cæsardom: yes, and for that
Have oped my soul-gates to the powers of hell,
And daily face spectres of horror, ghostly

Environments, the blue upbraiding lips
Of shadowy forms, that kiss in mockery,
And poison peace upon the paths of sleep.
To have borne in vain the murderer's scaring plague,
To be by a common woman—killed: I doubt not,
Had but occasion served, she would have done it.
Have laughed to do it, laughed on when 'twas done.
Ah! by that lately-laughing, cherruping mouth
Shall all her damned conspirators be snared:
Yes, and a thousand times shall she scream truth,
Ere I will hear; a thousand times shriek forth
The names of those her shrieks shall shriek to hell,
Ere she go after them. (*Re-enter Tigellinus.*) What,
Tigellinus!
What saith Epicharis?
*Tig.* Nothing.
*Ner.* Nothing?
*Tig.* Nothing.
Cæsar will never get a word from her.
*Ner.* Thou hast not killed her, fool?
*Tig.* Nay, Cæsar: but no corpse
Keeps better silence.
*Ner.* Where's thy art, man? Use
Rack, redhot pincers, the slow fire . . .
*Tig.* Not all together make her give a sound.
*Ner.* Persist.

*Tig.* They do; but 'tis beyond our power
To match the first pangs; and they moved her not.
I came to say we had forgot Senecio.

*Ner.* True: take him.

*Tig.* And to torture?

*Ner.* Rack him well.
But make this woman speak. Use better art.

*Tig.* I found the torturers sitting round their task:
Their zest had cooled. Without a cry or scream
'Tis a dull sport.

*Ner.* She is a Christian, then.

*Tig.* The Christians never plot: I think in that,
Cæsar, you wrong them.

*Ner.* I? Thou know'st them little:
They are the time's worst plague. I do not care
If they burned Rome or no: were they all burned
'Twould richly compensate the world. Hark, friend!
The people might be masters; what they lack
This Christ provides. Were I to prophesy,
I'd say that should their cursed doctrines spread,
They would one day drown all, learning and beauty,
Wisdom and rule and art. For that I hate them,
And love to destroy them. I AM THEIR ANTI-CHRIST.

# ACT · V

## SCENE · 1

*A strong room in the palace dungeon.* *TIGELLINUS* *seated at a table* CENTRE. *NATALIS scared, and with his hands bound behind him, stands* R. *before two Guards.*

*TIGELLINUS* (*to Guards*).

Leave him.— [*Exeunt Guards.*

Natalis, thou hast had a taste of the rack?

*NATALIS* (*kneels*).

Mercy, my lord; have mercy on me I pray thee:
I will tell all, and better without torture.

*Tig.* So far I have had mercy, sir: I have shown thee
In this Epicharis what thou mayst look for,
Should I lack mercy. Canst thou too be silent?

*Nat.* Nay, my lord, nay. My lord, I am not brave.
Knowing I cannot suffer, I will speak truth
Without the torture.

*Tig.* Truth, fool! what is that?
I haggle not with thee for thine own tale:
That cannot serve thee. I require of thee
Such answers as best please me.

*Nat.* I will confess.

*Tig.* Thou hast betrayed thy master Piso; now
Tell me, was Seneca in this conspiracy?

*Nat.* No, my lord.

*Tig.* (*calling*). Guards!

*Nat.* I swear he was not. (*Enter Guards.*)

*Tig.* Guards!
Take him to torture.

*Nat.* Oh, my lord, have pity!
Ask me not this.

*Tig.* I'll ask thee nothing else
While thou art parting with thy skin. Once more:
Was Seneca in this conspiracy?

*Nat.* He was.

*Tig.* Just as I thought; hold fast to that;
Else, by great Jupiter, the things thou hast seen
Are nothing.—Take him off and send in the other.

[*Exeunt Guards with Natalis.*

Now I am rid of Seneca. This method
Is easy and short. The foolish rich Scevinus
May serve me another way.

*Enter two Guards with Scevinus, whose hands are bound before him.*

(*To Guards.*) Leave him.—(*Exeunt Guards.*) Scevinus,
Cæsar hath ordered thee the rack.

*SCEVINUS* (*kneels*).

My lord,
Have pity upon me I beg. I turn informer.
I will betray it all: I withhold nothing.

*Tig.* Thou hast seen the torture of Epicharis . . .

*Sce.* O, my dear lord, not that! mercy!

*Tig.* Since she
Hath baulked my inquisitors, I have promised them
Some noisy victim to restore their credit.

*Sce.* Not me, not me!

*Tig.* And why not thee? I think thee
A likely fellow.

*Sce.* My lord, I am too tender.
The least prick of my finger, or if the wine
I drink be overheated, 'tis enough
To put me in a frenzy: I should die
At first stretch of the rack.

*Tig.* Pooh! man: they'd keep thee
Alive for a week.—

*Sce.* O spare me, good Tigellinus!
Spare me, I pray, kind Tigellinus, spare me!

*Tig.* Shall I? and if I do, what is it worth?
Hast thou two thousand sesters?

*Sce.* Oh, my lord,
I have not the tenth of it.

*Tig.* (*calling*). Guards!

*Sce.* I swear I have not. (*Enter Guards.*)

*Tig.* Get up, that is the price.—Guards, take him off.—

I'll make good use of thee.

*Sce.* Sir, I might find it.

*Tig.* (*motioning Guards back*). Hark, thou canst raise the money, and mayst write

From prison to thy friends: and if 'tis paid
To me to-night, I will respect thy wish.—
Guards, take this prisoner to the outer cell;
Let him there write what missives he desires,
And see they be delivered in the city.

[*Exeunt severally.*

## SCENE · 2

*A room in the house of Piso.*

*Enter FLAVUS and PISO, meeting.*

*FLAVUS.*

My lord, I come from Rufus.

*PISO.*

Give thy message.

*Fla.* Natalis and Scevinus both are taken.
All must be known; and your complicity
The first: meanwhile Rufus is unsuspected;

Cæsar hath summoned him to sit as judge
In trial of the accused this afternoon.
He has therefore this last hope, but only this,
That you with all your friends proceed at once
To the fort of the guard: he will proclaim you there,
Relying on the people, who well know
Your prudence, and may passively accept
The revolution as a thing accomplished,
Seeing you countenance it, and have your title
Supported by the guards.

*Pis.* Calls he this hope?
'Tis the forlorn hope.

*Fla.* Desperation, my lord,
Is not despair. I venture it with gladness.

*Pis.* So do not I. I am no doubt betrayed
Already and watched.

*Fla.* Rufus may still be clear:
The informers will not name him while the guards
Remain their last resource.

*Pis.* Bid him act quickly,
And for himself.

*Fla.* My lord, he looks to you.
Unless you appear we cannot gain the people.
Consider how we have all trusted our lives
To your concerted action: now stand forth
And help us as you can.

*Pis.* Stay, man; consider
How I have trusted my life to your action;
And what ye have done with it: my stake in this
Compares no more with thine than does my prize
In the success with thine: I should be Cæsar,
Thou Flavus still: so, if we fail, I suffer
In like degree, my family dishonoured,
My rich estates cónfiscate, my innocent,
Honest dependants, whom I count by thousands,
All plunged in misery: to them my duties
Forbid this reckless hazard.—Return to Rufus,
And say so much. I utter no reproach
'Gainst thee nor any other; I forgive
What reproach thou didst hint. I know thou'rt brave;
Thou hast wished well, and I with thee; but now
Our ill-built ship founders. I am your captain;
My word is each man for himself: my part
I shall act no less bravely, that I see
All goes to the bottom.

*Fla.* Defer, my lord, to the last.
I'll save you if I may. I will go armed
To the trial.

*Pis.* Act for thyself; think not of me.
Now bear my word to Rufus. Go this way.

[*Exit, showing Flavus out.*

## SCENE . 3

*The previous scene withdraws and discovers an open court of the palace disposed for the trial, the seats in a half-circle. Nero's at centre, back, the seat for the Judge at left front: the raised platform for the accused at right front. Guards behind* NERO, *and lining the half-circle.*

*Enter* LUCAN, FLAVUS *and* ASPER (L.). *They stand talking under cover of Judge's seat. Guards and most of audience are assembled.*

*LUCAN.*

Rufus will do his best: trust we to Rufus
To minimize the matter; 'tis his interest.

*FLAVUS.*

If Cæsar come unguarded, I will kill him.

*ASPER.*

I will stand by thee. Is Lateranus here?

*Luc.* He said he should not come. I pray you both
Wait: let us first see who is betrayed.

*Fla.* Go thou,
And wait thy death. (*Lucan goes to his place.*)

*Asp.* Let us die bravely, Flavus;
'Tis all we can. (*Coming forward to centre.*)

*Fla.* We will. Ah, see! he is guarded.

*Enter* R. *Nero, Tigellinus and Rufus; preceded by Guards, who thrust Flavus and Asper back, making passage for Cæsar.*

*NERO* (*at centre*).

Here is our court. I love the open air:
It savours more of justice, heavenly justice;
And while we sit, we breathe. Rufus, ascend.
(*Showing Judge's seat.*)
Cæsar is plaintiff, and in his own cause
Might bear a bias: so I make thee judge.
My counsel, Tigellinus, sit by me. (*They sit.*)

*Fla.* (*to Asp.*) I'll not despair. I'll keep my dagger ready.
Be near him if I rush. (*Asper takes a seat on Rufus' proper left.*)

*Ner.* Is it in order, Rufus,
That I speak first?

*RUFUS.*

'Twere well for form's sake, Cæsar,
To state the purpose of this court, and read
The names of those denounced. Where are the informers?

*Ner.* Bring in the prisoners.—As for this court, general,
'Tis called to inquire upon a matter known
To most here: they that know it not may gather it

As we proceed; I will premise thus far:—
You will hear certain citizens confess
That they, with others whom they name, were joined
In a conspiracy to murder another,
And him your chiefest citizen, myself.
Rome at the first had kings, and being returned
To an autocratic rule, in the exigency
Of wide dominion, I, her king, her Cæsar,
Her prætor, tribune, consul, typify
The general weal: who aims at my life, aims
At Rome and all. Therefore, though Cæsar needs
No sanction to his sentence, he invites
The public ear unto the public wrong,
That all, before the guilty are arrested,
May hear the evidence, and self-impeachment
Of the two chief informers. There they are; 2230
Natalis and Scevinus.—(*They have been brought in guarded during Nero's speech, and now stand up.* R.)
As plaintiff I shall watch the case, as Cæsar
I watch the judge. Proceed!

*TIGELLINUS.* Scevinus.

*SCEVINUS.* Here, sir.

*Tig.* Thou in this writing hast confessed the truth
Of all the several charges brought against thee
By thy slave Milichus.

*Sce.* I have, my lord.

*Tig.* 'Tis true there was a plot 'gainst Cæsar's life,
And thou the instrument?
*Sce.* My lord, 'tis true:
I crave great Cæsar's mercy.
*Tig.* In hope of that,
And moved by late contrition, thou hast revealed
The names of thy confederates.
*Sce.* I have.
*Ruf.* Will Cæsar let me scan the information?
*Ner.* No need. Take each in turn.
*Tig.* (*to Sce.*). I ask thee, therefore,
Now to confirm this paper in open court.
Who was the head of this conspiracy?
The man who thought to sit in Cæsar's place,
When ye had murdered Cæsar?
*Sce.* Calpurnius Piso.
*Tig.* Stand forth, Natalis.
*NATALIS.* Here, my lord.
*Tig.* Art thou
Of Piso's household?
*Nat.* I am, my lord.
*Tig.* Then thou
Shouldst know: was Piso head of this conspiracy?
*Nat.* He was, my lord.
*Ner.* Judgment!—
*Ruf.* Arrest Calpurnius Piso on this charge.

*Ner.* (*to Tig.*). Send and arrest him. (*Tig. speaks to those behind.*)

*Fla.* (*to Ruf.*). Let me by thee, Rufus!—
Send me to Cæsar with some paper, Rufus!—
Now I may reach him.—To save Piso, Rufus!—

*Ruf.* (*to Flav., thrusting him back*). Be still!

*Tig.* (*looking up*). Order! who speaks?

*Ner. whispers to Tigellinus, who sets two Guards before Nero's seat.*

*Ruf.* (*to Flav.*). See, fool; he hath smelt thee.

*Tig.* I'll ask Natalis further if he knew
Of any other chief man in the state
Cognizant of this plot, or joined therein.

*Nat.* Calpurnius Piso was the chief, my lord.

*Tig.* No other? and I have here thy writing!

*Fla.* (*aside to Rufus*). Now,
General, thy turn is come.

*Ruf.* (*to Natalis*). Speak, sir!

*Nat.* I pray,
Rufus, to urge not this: nay, from my heart
I say . . .

*Tig.* 'Tis written here.

*Ruf.* This witness, Cæsar,
I do not trust.

*Tig.* Carry Natalis out
To torture.

*Nat.* I will speak.

*Tig.* Then name, sir, name!

*Nat.* Seneca.

*Ruf.* Seneca!

*Tig.* Yes, Seneca.

Let Seneca be arrested. Judge, what sayst thou?

*Ruf.* Let Seneca be arrested.

*Fla.* (*to Ruf.*). Villain thou art!

*Ner.* (*to Tigell. who has whispered to him*). Leave Seneca to me.

*Tig.* These are the heads. Now will I read three names:

Tell me, Scevinus, if I read aright:

Quintian, Senecio, Lucan.

*Sce.* I denounce them.

*Ner.* Three hypocritical and fawning curs,

The lap-dogs of the palace. Where áre they?

*Tig.* They are here, Cæsar.—Quintian, stánd forth.

*QUINTIAN.*

Here,

My lord.

*Tig.* Dost thou confess?

*Qu.* I give Scevinus

The lie direct.

*Ner.* We found thee in his company,

The hour of his arrest.

*Qu.* Cæsar, I knew
Of nothing 'gainst thy life. 'Tis true that oft
I have spoken against Vatinius; were he Cæsar,
I should be guilty: but yourself have loved
To prick me to it; and so, maybe, my tongue
Hath given Scevinus undeserved occasion
To think me of his party.
*Ner.* Rufus, judge!
*Ruf.* I look for evidence.
*Tig.* Dost thou?—Then, Quintian,
To save thy life wilt thou inform?
*Qu.* I will.
*Tig.* Then was not Lucan with you?
*Qu.* He was.
*Ner.* O Quintian,
Quintian! if I forgave thee for thy treason,
I could not for thy folly. Arrest him.
*Ruf.* Arrest Quintian.
The next?
*Tig.* Senecio, General, hath confessed.
His evidence we will take later. Where is
Lucan?
*Luc.* I am here, my lord, ready to answer.
*Ruf.* Then let us hear thine answer.
*Luc.* I deny
The charge of treason: but so far confess

My intimacy with the accused, that oft
My zeal for senatorial forms hath led me
To listen to them, when the words that passed
Might tell against me: and if I was betrayed
By antiquarian taste, to trust these men
Against advice and warning . . .
*Ner.* Ah! thou sayest
Against advice. Who warned thee?
*Luc.* Cæsar, I said . . .
*Ner.* Sir, I will know who warned thee of this plot,
And warned not me.
*Luc.* Sire, I meant not so much.
*Tig.* We heard thee.
*Luc.* I make appeal to Rufus, whether
I must betray the innocent.
*Ner.* If thou look
For thine own pardon.
*Tig.* We can make thee speak.
*Ruf.* Tell us, sir, who these wondrous patriots were,
Who set thy private safety above Cæsar's.
*Luc.* If Cæsar bids me speak, I may hide nothing.
I will confess it was my mother, Atilia,
Who warned me against these men. Punish not her
For not betraying her son.
*Ner.* Nay, sir, but thee
Who in this bungle of prevarication

Betrayest thine own mother. Judge!

*Ruf.* Arrest him.

*Luc.* I am arrested, Cæsar, not condemned.

*Ner.* Thou'lt see. Stand by!—(*To Tigell.*) Another woman! why

Comes not Epicharis?

*Tig.* I know no cause

For the delay. I'll send again.

*Ner.* Do so.

(*To Scevinus.*) Go on, sir: who is next?

*Sce.* Plautius Lateranus.

*Ner.* Plautius Lateranus! Have more care

Whom thou accusest. This is one bounden to me

By special favours: from disgrace I raised him

To sit among the senate, and now he is chosen

Consul.

*Tig.* Dost thou denounce him?

*Sce.* I do, my lord.

*Ner.* Whom then can Cæsar trust? Judge, Rufus, judge!

*Tig.* Judge!

*Ruf.* Let him be arrested.

*Ner.* Send to his house.

*Enter an Officer.*

*OFFICER.*

Cæsar, being sent to arrest Calpurnius Piso,

We found him dead.

*Ruf.* Dead! how?

*Ner.* Is Piso dead?

*Fla.* (*to Rufus*). See how thou hast ruined all!

*Ruf.* (*to Flavus*). Speak not to me!

*Off.* He died by his own hand as we arrived.
I viewed the body.

*Tig.* He must have killed himself
To escape the confiscation.

*Ner.* Bah! he hath robbed
The treasury.

*Tig.* We shall have pickings yet.

*Ruf.* Cæsar, the untimely suicide of the accused
Confirms the charge against him in so far
As he hath declined to meet it. But the trial
Falls to the ground: we lose both the defence
And the chief witness.

*Ner.* Not so. My chief object
Remains, and my chief witness.—(*To Tig.*) Where is
Epicharis?

*Tig.* I see a litter passing 'neath the trees.

*Ner.* Meet them, and bring her in.—

[*Exit Tigellinus.*

I now produce a woman in the court.
Her name Epicharis: she lives at Naples,
And there was used by the conspirators

To tamper with the navy: the Admiral
Arrested her; but she, being charged before me,
Turned off suspicion with a specious tale,
Which I more readily believed, because
I hate informers, nor will lightly think
Evil of anyone. Senecio
Confirmed her story, but hath since confessed
He knew it false: himself, as he affirms,
Was not in Piso's confidence; this woman
Knew all. Now Piso towards Senecio
Trusted too much in trusting but a little,
Trusting Epicharis much he trusted well:
For in the extreme of torture she hath not flinched,
Nor given a sound: but seeing her silence now
Confuted by so many tongues, she hath yielded,
And promised to speak truth. See, here she is.
*During this speech Epicharis has been borne in on the litter, and is set down at the centre of the stage.*
Her speech shall now unmask what traitorous faces
Still screen their villany.

*Ruf.* A woman, Cæsar;
And in the pangs of torture, and fear of death!
What evidence is this?

*Ner.* What would ye object?

*Ruf.* Shall Romans have their free lives played with thus?

*Ner.* What puts thee in fear? Silence!—Epicharis,
I bid thee now speak truth before the court.
Piso is dead. Thou seest thy comrades taken.
Truth may not save thy life: yet speak the truth
As thy last hope. Let no man interrupt her.

*EPICHARIS (speaks from the litter).*

Cæsar, I thank thee that in all my torture
Thou hast spared my tongue to tell thee truth at last:
That I am admitted where my free confession
May reach the public ear, nay not denied
Thine own ear, and for that I thank thee most;
And for my torture I thank thee too: 'tis proved
I speak not lightly, and must be well believed.
Thou bidst me, mighty Cæsar, tell thee truth:
Weak is my tongue to tell the mighty truths
Cæsar dare hear, and none hath dared to tell:
And I die . . . hearken quickly. Of all thou seest
There is not one whom thou canst trust: all hate
thee . . .
Yet needst thou not, great Cæsar, fear them much;
For all are cowards: nay, there is not among them
One brave enough to kill thee. And yet again,
Great Cæsar, I counsel thee to fear them too;
For all the world 'gainst one will have their way.
I know thou fear'st. Then who is most thy foe?

Whom first to kill? That I can tell thee, Cæsar:
For none of all thou seest, or ever saw'st,
Or wilt see again, nay, not thy murdered mother,
Thy poisoned brother, thy beheaded wife,
Whose bloody ghosts watch on the banks of hell
To mark thy doom, none hateth thee as I,
Defieth thee as I, curseth thee as I.
O emperor of the world, thine hour is come.
Within thy cankered soul dwell side by side
Remorse and vanity to drive thee mad:
The grecian furies hound thee, the christian devils
Dispute for thee. Fly to thy dunghill, Cæsar,
Where thou must perish . . .

*Ner.* Will none there stop her mouth?

*Ep.* Plague-spotted, abhorred for ever—by all—accurst—

*Asp.* Let no man interrupt her!

*Ner.* Who spoke? Arrest him.—

*Epicharis' last words are spoken as the Soldiers surround her. She struggles on the litter violently, and falls back dead. Other Guards arrest Asper.*

Who art thou, sir? thy name?

*Asp.* My name is Asper.
I am centurion under Rufus.

*Ner.* Rufus,
Know'st thou thy man?

*Ruf.* I grieve, sire, it is true:
He is one of my centurions.
*Ner.* Question him.
*Tig.* (*who is standing by Epicharis, to Nero*). Epicharis is dead.
*Ner.* Ye have killed her, fools?
Hath she got quit?
*Tig.* 'Twas her own doing, Cæsar:
She meshed her neck among the cords, and so
Hath reft her of what little life remained.
*Ner.* Remove her to the prison, and let physicians
Attend her at once.
*Tig.* She is dead. (*They carry Epicharis out.*)
*Ner.* Rufus, proceed
With thy centurion.
*Asp.* If all hate thee, Cæsar,
How wilt thou bid that hater question this?
*Ruf.* What, fellow?
*Asp.* Thou that sittest there to judge,
And shouldst stand here, wilt thou dare question me?
*Ruf.* I, fellow?
*Ner.* Ha! Rufus, thou turnest pale.
*Ruf.* With anger I turn pale, that in your presence
A traitor should defame me.
*Ner.* Be cool, sir:
Thou wast suspected, now accused thou art.

Thou hast but one appeal: In thy worst case
'Tis to thy friends (*pointing to accused*).

*Ruf.* Call not those men my friends.

*Ner.* I'll see. Speak, traitors all; was Rufus with you?

*Luc., Sce., and others.* He was. He is guilty.

*Ner.* Arrest the judge.

*Ruf.* Who dares?

What officer of mine dares raise his hand
Against his general?

*CASSIUS.*

That will I, my lord;
Knowing that thou deservest more than all.

*Ruf.* Help! help!—(*To Flavus.*) Now, man, strike now or never.

*Fla.* Hush!
I am the last. (*Rufus is seized after a struggle.*)

*Ner.* (*stepping down*). Now will I mount myself the judge's seat. (*Fla. rushes forward to stab Nero.*)

*Ner.* Ha! Murder! (*Tigellinus, who has watched Flavus, intercepts him. Flavus is seized.*)

*Tig.* Clear the Court!

*The inner line of Guards faces outwards, and all present except the prisoners are driven from centre into the wings, and the court begins to clear.*

*Ner.* (*to Flavus, who is held before him*). Who art thou, sir?

*Fla.* A tribune and an honest soldier, Cæsar;
And none more faithful, while you well deserved.
But I began to hate you from the day
You killed your mother, and debased yourself,
Performing to the people: and I am freed
From all my oaths, by all the gods in heaven,
With all the world; and sworn with half the world
To kill thee or be killed.

*Ner.* Fool! I shall kill thee,
With thy half world, and rule the other half.

(*The curtain falls, or scene shuts across.*)

## SCENE · 4

*A room in the palace. Enter Tigellinus.*

*TIGELLINUS.*

Rufus, my rival, is condemned to die:
The city troops are mine: I am secure:
Cæsar I hold by flattery, Rome by force.
Sophronius Tigellinus of Agrigentum!
Of Agrigentum,—well done! be content.
Thou hast the second place in all the world,
And rulest the first; while of thine envious foes,
Sulla, Plautus, and Piso, all three are dead:
A few remain: but on the Spaniard Seneca
Shall the Sicilian eagle swoop to-night,

As on a flying hare. Poppæa, in this
My keen ally, hunts with me eagerly.

*Enter Nero and Poppæa.*

Hail, mighty Cæsar! fairest Augusta, hail!

(*They salute.*)

The assassin hath not hurt thy spirits?

*NERO.*

Fear not,
I have dined.

*Tig.* Dined well, I pray the gods.

*Ner.* Superbly.—
We sent to speak with thee of Seneca;
What should be done.

*Tig.* What hath been done already?

*Ner.* Hark, I will tell thee. I sent a letter to him,
Pressing the information of Natalis;—
'Why, if thou knewest of this plot'—I said—
'Didst not thou warn me? And if thou knewest not,
What was thy reason why thou didst refuse
Audience to Piso, alleging that such meetings
Were good for neither; adding also, *I hold*
*Thy life needful for mine*?' Now I await
His answer.

*Tig.* The tribune is returned.

*Ner.* Impossible;
Seneca is in Campania.

*Tig.* Nay, your majesty;
He is in the suburbs: he returned to-day,
Trusting his wit before his innocence.
*Ner.* Go, fetch the tribune in. [*Exit Tigellinus.*

*POPPÆA.*

Why dally thus?
*Ner.* I dally not: I go the shortest way
To find if he be guilty.
*Pop.* Stick you at that?
*Ner.* Romans are free. There is no man can be touched
On an unproven charge.
*Pop.* Are you not Cæsar?
*Ner.* Cæsar administers the law, while it
Can minister to him.

*Re-enter Tigellinus.*

*Tig.* Here is his answer written.
*Ner.* Read it us, Tigellinus.
*Tig.* If I can . . .
The letters are so pinched and shaky . . . it needs
The scholarship of Cæsar.
*Ner.* Give it to me.
(*Reads.*) 'To Cæsar, Lucius Annæus Seneca
Greeting . . . In answer to thy message; first
'Tis true that once Natalis came to me

From Piso, and begged that I would visit him:
And I excused myself on plea of sickness,
And need of quiet: As to the words imputed,
However I may prize thy safety, Cæsar,
I have no cause to set a private person's
Above my own; nor do I stoop to flattery,
As well thou knowest; nor to such shallow arts
As would hide treason in a salutation.'

*Tig.* Is that the sum?

*Ner.* 'Tis all. He is not guilty.

*Tig.* Not guilty!

*Ner.* Nay.

*Pop.* Why, he confesses it.

*Ner.* I know the man: his mind is here at ease.
The style is pithy and careless. When he has aught
To excuse, he is wordy.

*Tig.* He was wordy enough
In the matter of Agrippina, true.

*Ner.* Well, sir!

*Pop.* And in the matter of Britannicus.

*Ner.* Why raise these matters now? 2500

*Tig.* These are the matters
That Seneca harps on: while he lives they live.

*Pop.* These are the deeds Epicharis charged against thee.

*Tig.* This was the root of Flavus' hate.

*Pop.* 'Tis this
The people mean, who whisper when I pass,
'Octavia, Octavia.'
*Tig.* And he now persuades
Half Rome 'twas not himself who did these things,
But thou . . . which thou, permitting him to live,
Indorsest with thy name; dost set, I say,
The imperial warrant on the black account:
As orphans sign away their patrimony
To scheming uncles; as unwitting pupils
To crafty tutors fall a prey.
*Ner.* One lesson
He taught me perfectly, that is to hate him.
*Pop.* Thy hate and love go by half measures, Nero.
*Tig.* 'Twere pretty, Cæsar, wert thou a private person,
To play the philosopher upon the man
Who led thee astray—albeit to sacrifice
Thy wife and friend,—if he who saved thy life
May style himself thy friend . . .
*Ner.* Yes, friend; thou savedst
My life to-day.
*Tig.* And yet saved not, if thou
Wilt throw it straight away, and with thy saviour's.
*Ner.* Stay, I am resolved: I will not vex you further:
I yield. I know there is no man in the world,

Nor ever was, but hath his flaw: In some
'Tis a foul blot, that in the eye of nature
Stands out unpardonable and unredeemed
By all the school of virtues, howsoe'er
They dance in grace around it: In another
'Tis like a beauty-mark, a starry mole
Which on a virgin's body but sets off
The dazzling flesh, that else were self-extinguished
In its own fairness.—Yet by these flecks and flaws,
Whate'er they be, 'tis fated that men fall:
And thus may I, nay must; unless in time
I heed good warning, for my fault is gross.
I am over-generous; yes; ye say it; I know it.
That is my flaw. It is because my schemes
Are wider than his own, that Seneca hates me:
Because the world hath tasted more of freedom
Under my rule than under any Cæsar
Who went before—and that can no man question—
It is for this my throne hath more been envied,
And by more plots and treacheries besieged,
Than ever others were: and when I saw
(My safety and the people's good being one)
I must make holocaust of private feelings
To that which helped the whole, then 'twas for that
The bungling crowd condemned me, & where I looked
For gratitude to be my consolation,

I met reproach. 'Twas Seneca, ye say,
Who did those things. 'Tis true those deeds were his
In reason and connivence; but in the act,
Doing and suffering they were mine, and are.
Yet now, if he withdraw his countenance,
Condemn, wear vulgar horror on his face,
And turn men's hearts against me, what could move
My anger more if I were vain or cruel?
No. Have your will;—and if I hinder not,
He cannot blame me; since I do but play
Seneca to your Cæsar.

*Tig.* I thank thee, sire.
He dies to-night; or shall we wait to have him
Compose the palliation?

*Ner.* Jest not; 'tis done. [*Exit Tig.*

*Pop.* You have talked too long, Nero; come in & rest.

*Ner.* He was my tutor once, and once I loved him.

*Pop.* You might have done it with a nod.

*Ner.* He is old:
I rob him not of much. The end of life
Is tedious, I believe. Come back, Poppæa;
And while we are in our prime, let us be merry
And thank the gods. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE . 5

(As epilogue.)

*Scene withdraws and shows Seneca's garden in the suburbs: a table set out under a tree.*

*Enter SENECA, THRASEA, and PRISCUS.*

*SENECA.*

This way: I have bid them set a table, Thrasea,
Under my favourite tree. Here let us sit,
And watch the April sunset; the mild air
Permits this summer pleasure.

*THRASEA.*

I long doubted
Whether to come upon an invitation
Written before these troubles.

*Sen.* You did well
Not to desert me. Fannia too shall comfort
My grieved Paullina.—Here is the best wine
Of all my vineyards: drink to my long journey:—
But first remember solemnly our friends
Who have already died to-day: I pour
This cup to them, and specially must name
My nephew Lucan.

*Thr.* 'Tis an ancient custom.
*Sen.* (*offering to Thrasea*). And should be kept.
*Thr.* (*taking and sprinkling*). I'll name the gentle Piso.

*PRISCUS* (*taking from Thrasea*).

This to Epicharis. (*Sprinkling.*)
*Thr.* Well spoken, son.
No better wish than that we all may die
Bravely as she.
*Sen.* So be it! Now let us sit. (*They sit.*)
And I between (*sitting*). I would so spend this hour,
That ye shall not forget it in after-days,
When ye think of me. 'Tis the last time, friends,
That ye will sup with me.
*Pr.* Nay, say not so:
I trust you have escaped.
*Sen.* Look on yon sun:
An hour hence he will set; and now he sinks
Smiling eternal promises. Ye both
Shall see him rise, but I—I shall not see it.
This tree shall hang its branches, and another
May sit and comfort his poetic sadness,
As I have done, only not I: I only
Not here . . . not there, where I have been: all things
Have hitherto existed with me, henceforth
All will exist without me.

*Pr.* Have more hope.
*Sen.* Nay, it is so; what else could Cæsar mean?
*Thr.* Your answer may convince him.
*Sen.* Nay, good Thrasea;
These be the last hours of my life: I'd say
To you, my friends, what I have most at heart.
And first rejoice with me that I depart
With all my senses perfect, not as some,
Tortured by pain and praying for release;
Nor like a man, who walking in the dark,
Comes to a brink upright, and steppeth over
Unhesitatingly, because he knows not.
Nor is my term much shortened, I shall die
Like aged Socrates, and with his hope
That the spirit doth not perish;—I mean not
A senseless immortality of fame:
That I shall have, but more I'll have; I dream
Of life in which I may be Seneca again,
Seneca still.
*Thr.* Now if thou couldst convince us,
Seneca, of that, 'twere worthy thy last hour.
Teach me to picture what thou thinkst to see,
That land betwixt oblivion and regret;
Where is't? how is it?
*Sen.* It lies not in the scope
Of demonstration, Thrasea; but my heart

Bears witness to it: the best that I could say
Is in my books. What all mankind desires,
The mind requires; what it requires believes:
And calls it truth. I hold that one God made us,
And at our death receives our spirits kindly:
We shall meet elsewhere those whom we leave here.

*Pr.* This will not comfort Romans: Nero again,
And Tigellinus . . .

*Sen.* Why may there not be
Distinction, Priscus, as old fables tell;
Rewards for good, and punishments for ill?
The myths are gross and brutal, but philosophy
Finds reason in religion.

*Thr.* Then the vulgar,
'Gainst whom you have waged your philosophic war,
Hold the last truth.

*Sen.* The sanction of all truth
Lies in our common nature. A religion
Based on the truth of what all men desire
Must carry all before it.

*Thr.* But you said
Philosophy found reason in religion.
What is your ground?

*Sen.* My first is this, that else
All were unjust. It needs a second life
To set this even.

*Thr.* You have not found in life
Its own reward?
*Sen.* Nay, I have not.
*Thr.* I know not
If 'tis not sadder, this profound impeachment
Of God's whole constitution as we see it,
Than the belief that death's our end of all.
To live in conscious harmony with nature
May satisfy our being; but religion
Looks like the poetry which childhood makes
To cloke its empty terrors, or bedizen
Its painted idols: such is my persuasion.
*Pr.* And mine.
*Sen.* Ah, Priscus, thou art young. I once
Looked forward into life with a proud heart,
Nor saw the exigency and irony
Of all-subduing Fate. Consider, Priscus,
Whether your father's virtue or Nero's crimes
Have found their recompense.
*Pr.* If Thrasea's heart
Is comforted by virtue, sir, and Nero
Made wretched by his crime . . .
*Sen.* Then put it thus:
If any were to make a tragedy
Of these events, how would it pass or please,
If Nero lived on at the end unpunished,

Triumphing still o'er good?

*Thr.* Yes, Seneca:
But see you make not now your god of the stage
The God of Nature. Our true tragedy
Is just this outward riddle, and the god
That mends all, comes not in pat at his cue
On a machine, but liveth in our hearts
Resolving evil faster than it falls,
As the sun melts the snow.

*Sen.* 'Tis not enough,
Thrasea, 'tis not enough: there must be more.

. . . . . .

Hear you a tramping? That is Cæsar's men:
They will surround the garden. Come aside.
(*Comes to front with Thrasea.*)
Stand by me, Thrasea, to the last. I would not
Slur the last act of life. Be thou my witness
Of word and deed.

*Enter Paullina with Fannia, who goes to Priscus.*

*PAULLINA.*

O Seneca, they are come;
They are come again.

*Sen.* Dear wife, remember, and help me.—
See, friends, the sun is almost set; 'tis time
We went within.

*Pau.* Alas! (*weeping.*)

*Sen.* (*to Paullina*). Thy tears distract me,
And shame us both.

*Enter a Centurion.*

*CENTURION.*

Annæus Seneca!

*Sen.* Well, sir: thy message? Art not thou Silvanus,
That stoodst with Rufus and with Subrius Flavus?
How hast thou wriggled out?

*Cent.* I am Silvanus,
And bring thee Cæsar's bidding.

*Sen.* Is it death?

*Cent.* 'Tis death.

*Pau.* Shame on thee.

*Sen.* Hush, wife: be brave.—A man
Need not be shamed, sirs, that his wife bewail him.
(*To Paullina.*) Go thou, Paullina, fetch my will.

*Cent.* Stay, madam:
'Tis not allowed.

*Sen.* This is unkind: my wealth
Was Cæsar's gift: but now he takes from me
More than he ever gave, my life: 'tis mean
To grudge me my last freedom, the little use
I'd make of his old favours. I but wished
To leave mementoes to three loving friends,

Who have supped with me to-night.—In lieu thereof
The example of my constancy shall be
More lively undelayed by gentle speeches
And farewell gifts. Come with me, all is ready.

*Cent.* I await thee.

*Sen.* Farewell, friends! Farewell, Paullina!

*Pau.* Not to me here.

*Sen.* Yes, we must part: the day
Is not much hastened. See how skeleton-like
Already the hand, with which I go to shear
The filmy threads of life.

*Pau.* But I will die
With thee.

*Sen.* Be still. Let not thy heart rebel.
Now is the hour of proof.

*Pau.* If 'twere God's will.

*Sen.* All is God's will: and as we lived together
In love, so now we part.

*Pau.* Why should we part?
What thou doest I will do: I fear not death.
I'll hold my little candle by thy sun . . .

*Sen.* It may not be. Use thy high courage rather
To live. Yes, live in peace: live long.

*Pau.* With thee
Murdered! Alas!

*Sen.* Give me thy last embrace.

*Pau.* Was not my faith then true? Are we not one?
*Sen.* Yes, yes: we are one.
*Pau.* Then now forbid me not
To die with thee.

*FANNIA.*

Do not this thing, madam!

*Pau.* Nay, hold me not!
*Sen.* Paullina, dost thou make
This desperate choice truly with all thy heart?
*Pau.* With all my heart.
*Sen.* Thou dost? Dear wife, I thought
Cæsar could part us: now I can forgive him.—
To you, my friends, farewell! Thrasea, farewell!
Priscus, farewell! Fannia, farewell!—Paullina,
(*Taking her hand*)
Since thou canst dare, we will go hand in hand
To learn the mighty secret; we will set forth
Together unto the place where all have gone.

END

# NOTES

# THE FEAST OF BACCHUS

(From 2nd edition).

## NOTE I.

THIS attempt to give *Menander* to the english stage is based upon his 'Heautontimorumenos' as we know it through *Terence*. That play, though marked by roman taste, is a work of high excellence; but as it stands would be unpresentable to a christian audience, chiefly on account of the story of *Antiphila's* exposure, which must deprive *Chremes* of sympathy. And, since the liberties which *Terence* took with *Menander* cannot be determined, it was but mannerly to extend the necessary alteration, and suppress the slaves with their tedious and difficult intrigue. Thus altered, only about one-sixth of the latin original remains; and the play is perhaps not so sound in plot as *Terence* made it, and is still weighted with the badness of his *Bacchis* [*Gorgo*]; but it has the advantage of being more easily followed. The construction of the modern stage required the opening change. All that is beautiful in *Terence*, and therefore possibly most of what was *Menander's*, has been

carefully preserved; and some extant fragments of his have also found a lodging.

The metre is a line of six stresses, written according to rules of english rhythm; and its correspondence with the latin comic trimeter iambic is an accident. Whatever a stress may carry, it should never be made to carry more than one long syllable with it,—the comic vein allowing some license as to what is reckoned as long;—but as there are no conventional, or merely metric stresses (except sometimes in the sixth place; and in the third, when the midverse break usual in english six-stressed verse is observed, or that place is occupied by a proper name), the accompanying long and short syllables may have very varied relation of position with regard to their carrying stress. Where more than four short unstressed syllables come together, a stress is distributed or lost; and in some conditions of rhythm this may occur when only four short syllables come together; and this distributed stress occurs very readily in the second, fourth, and fifth places. Such at least seem some of the rhythmic laws, any infringement of which must be regarded as a fault or liberty of writing: and the best has not been made of the metre. A natural emphasizing of the sense gives all the rhythm that is intended.

The author thinks that so much explanation is due to the reader, because the verse is new. He has been told that it will be said by the critics to be prose; but that if it were printed as prose, they might pronounce it to be verse: and this is the effect aimed at; since a comic metre which will admit colloquial speech without torturing it must have such a loose varying rhythm.

## NOTE II.

(From Montaigne's essays, II. 8.)

'Feu M. le Mareschal de Monluc, ayant perdu son filz qui mourut en l'Isle de Maderes, brave Gentilhomme à la verité, et de grande esperance, me faisoit fort valoir entre ses autres regrets, le desplaisir et creve-cœur qu'il sentoit de ne s'estre jamais communiqué à luy: et sur cette humeur d'une gravité et grimace paternelle, avoir perdu la commodité de gouster et bien cognoistre son filz; et aussi de luy declarer l'extreme amitié qu'il luy portoit, et le digne jugement qu'il faisoit de sa vertu. "Et ce pauvre garçon, disoit-il, n'a rien veu de moy qu'une contenance refroignée et pleine de mespris; et a emporté cette creance, que je n'ay sceu ny l'aimer ny l'estimer selon son merite. A qui guardoy-je à descouvrir cette singuliere affection que je luy portoy dans mon

ame? Estoit-ce pas luy qui en devoit avoir tout le plaisir et toute l'obligation? Je me suis contraint et gehenné pour maintenir ce vain masque: et y ay perdu le plaisir de sa conversation, et sa volonté quant et quant, qu'il ne me peut avoir portée autre que bien froide, n'ayant jamais receu de moy que rudesse, ny senti qu'une façon tyrannique." Je trouve cette plainte estoit bien prise et raisonable.' It surprises me that Montaigne does not in this place refer to Menedemus. In the tenth essay, Des Livres, he writes thus of Terence: 'Quant au bon Terence, la mignardise, et les graces du langage latin, je le trouve admirable à representer au vif les mouvemens de l'ame, et la condition de nos mœurs: à toute heure nos actions me rejettent à luy: Je ne le puis lire si souvent que je n'y treuve quelque beauté et grace nouvelle. . . . Sa gentilesse et sa mignardise nous retiennent par tout. Il est partout si plaisant, *Liquidus, puroque simillimus amni*, et nous remplit tant l'ame de ses graces, que nous en oublions celles de sa fable.'

## NERO, PART II

(From 1st edition).

### *ON ENCLITICS, ETC.*

In the fifth chapter of the *Life of Johnson*, the following story is given by Boswell: 'His schoolfellow and friend, Dr. Taylor, told me a pleasant anecdote of Johnson's triumphing over his pupil, David Garrick. When that great actor had played some little time at Goodman's Fields, Johnson and Taylor went to see him perform, and afterwards passed the evening at a tavern with him and old Giffard. Johnson, who was ever depreciating stage-players, after censuring some mistakes in emphasis, which Garrick had committed in the course of that night's acting, said, "The players, Sir, have got a kind of rant, with which they run on, without any regard either to accent or emphasis." Both Garrick and Giffard were offended at this sarcasm, and endeavoured to refute it; upon which Johnson rejoined, "Well now, I'll give you something to speak, with which you are little acquainted, and then we shall see how just my observation is. That shall be the criterion.

Let me hear you repeat the ninth commandment. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*" Both tried at it, said Dr. Taylor, and both mistook the emphasis, which should be upon *not* and *false witness*. Johnson put them right, and enjoyed his victory with glee.' Johnson was of course wrong, and Garrick right, at least if he accented the *shalt* in the usual way.

A friend of mine once told me that when he was a boy at St. Paul's school it fell to his lot to recite the passage in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, where Brutus and Cassius quarrel; and in the following lines

*Cass.* I am a soldier, I,
Older in practice, abler than yourself
To make conditions.
*Bru.* Go to; you áre not, Cassius.
*Cass.* I am.
*Bru.* I say you are nót.

when he stressed them correctly, as here shown, he was censured and told to say 'Go to; you are nót, Cassius.' However on the day of performance he lost his presence of mind, and did it right.

These two illustrations of pedantry refusing to conform to idiom will explain the occasion of many of the accents, with which I have thought it necessary

to disfigure my text; for a good number of them will be found to be common enclitics. The rest are all put as guides to the dramatic rhythm, and many of them to ensure the usual pronunciation of words in verses the rhythm of which depends on it, but which I found some readers stumble at, so that they would rather mispronounce the word than accept the intended rhythm.

In the present edition the numeration of the lines is copied from the first edition.

OXFORD: HORACE HART
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

# UNIFORM EDITION OF
# ROBERT BRIDGES' POETICAL WORKS

*CONTENTS.*

VOLUME I: Prometheus the Firegiver—Eros and Psyche—The Growth of Love—Notes. Small post 8vo, *6s.*

VOLUME II: Shorter Poems—New Poems—Notes. Small post 8vo, *6s.*

VOLUME III: The First Part of Nero—Achilles in Scyros—Notes. Small post 8vo, *6s.*

VOLUME IV: Palicio—The Return of Ulysses—Notes. Small post 8vo, *6s.*

VOLUME V: The Christian Captives—Humours of the Court—Notes. Small post 8vo, *6s.*

VOLUME VI: The Feast of Bacchus—Second Part of the History of Nero—Notes.

---

*SOME PRESS OPINIONS.*

*GUARDIAN.*—'The new edition is as dainty a one as any poet could desire for his work, and it will no doubt win for Mr. Bridges a considerable portion of the many new readers whom he deserves.'

*WORLD.*—'Beautiful and scholarly. . . . Mr. Bridges has firmly established himself in the favour of students of poetry, and the present edition should still further extend the appreciation of a writer whose work is always poetic and sincere.'

*BOOKMAN.*—'Mr. Bridges is more than an excellent craftsman. . . . He is of those that speak to the heart, and not merely to the aesthetic senses.'

*DAILY CHRONICLE.*—'Mr. Bridges is an artist whose work cannot fail to give pleasure to all who care for artistry in English verse. . . . We find here in full measure his sane and manly spirit, his love of life, of beauty and of England, his refinement of thought and of form, his cool and fresh lyric quality.'

*SCOTSMAN.*—'This new edition cannot but do good to English poetry all the world over, if it makes Mr. Bridges and his work better known than they are.'

*GLASGOW HERALD.*—'Mr. Robert Bridges, as a poet, has one supreme merit. He is always clear, pure, and understandable; so that it is ever a pleasure to read his verse, which is charged with knowledge of nature, her aspects, moods, and melodies. . . . Indeed, in reading the poems of Mr. Bridges one cannot but think that he is a reincarnation of some of the noble ancient poets.'

*ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.*—'Mr. Bridges is a poet who has established the right to be read as a whole by all who take contemporary literature seriously.'

---

LONDON: SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE, S.W.

FOURTH IMPRESSION. Small Crown 8vo, *5s.*

# SONGS OF ACTION.

## By A. CONAN DOYLE.

*PUNCH.*—'Dr. Conan Doyle has well named his verse "Songs of Action." It pulsates with life and movement, whether the scenes be laid on sea or land, on ship or on horseback.'

*WORLD.*—'Dr. Conan Doyle has the gift of writing good rattling songs with all the swing of Rudyard Kipling. . . . His songs are full of high spirits and "go".'

Mr. Quiller Couch in the *SPEAKER.*—'You may like them or not; you may think they were as easy to write as they are hard to get out of your memory; I make bold to promise that you will find it difficult to shut your memory upon them.'

*PALL MALL GAZETTE.*—'We congratulate Dr. Doyle on a volume that will add to his reputation.'

*ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.*—'Some of the most stirring rhymes of this age of new-awakened "Imperialism." Two little pieces in particular, "The Song of the Bow," and "A Ballad of the Ranks," deserve to become classics of their kind.'

*WESTMINSTER GAZETTE.*—'Dr. Conan Doyle's songs are happily named. They are full of movement, and are for the most part moving. Especially full-blooded and buoyant are the hunting songs.'

*BOOKMAN.*—'There is no question but that, if Mr. Kipling be first favourite with the soldiers, Mr. Doyle should be their Laureate's lieutenant, and that huntsmen and golfers should have his songs in their hearts and upon their lips.'

---

Fcap. 8vo, *5s.*

# SONGS OF AN ENGLISH ESAU.

## By CLIVE PHILLIPPS-WOLLEY,

Author of 'One of the Broken Brigade,' 'The Chicamon Stone,' &c.

*TIMES.*—'These are bracing songs, full of the Imperial spirit, of healthy sentiment and fresh air, and not without a true sense of poetic style.'

*DAILY TELEGRAPH.*—'Stirring verses. . . . The patriotic note sounds through most of them, and rings clear and true.'

*OUTLOOK.*—'They throb with love of Britain and Empire, and are appropriately virile and straightforward.'

*DUNDEE ADVERTISER.*—'Establishes the author as a minor Kipling. . . . The book breathes Imperialism, loyalty, and native confidence, and it stimulates British pride like a draught of wine.'

---

London: SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15 Waterloo Place, S.W.

# WORKS OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THE POEMS OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING. New and Cheaper Edition. Complete in one volume, with Portrait and Facsimile of the MS. of *A Sonnet from the Portuguese*. Large Crown 8vo, bound in cloth, gilt top, 3*s*. 6*d*.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING. Uniform Edition. Six volumes in set binding, Small Crown 8vo, 5*s*. each.

*This Edition is uniform with the Seventeen-Volume Edition of Mr. Robert Browning's Works. It contains several Portraits and Illustrations.*

MRS. BROWNING'S WORKS. IN THREE POCKET VOLUMES. Printed upon India Paper, with a Portrait-Frontispiece to each Volume. Fcap. 8vo, 2*s*. 6*d*. each net, in limp cloth; or 3*s*. net in leather.

AURORA LEIGH. With an Introduction by ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE, and a Frontispiece. Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt top, 3*s*. 6*d*.

A SELECTION FROM THE POETRY OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING. FIRST SERIES, Crown 8vo, 3*s*. 6*d*. SECOND SERIES, Crown 8vo, 3*s*. 6*d*.

POEMS. Small fcap. 8vo, bound in Art linen, with cut or uncut edges, 1*s*. (Also supplied in leather binding.)

EXTRACT FROM PREFATORY NOTE BY MR. ROBERT BROWNING.

'In a recent *Memoir of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, by JOHN H. INGRAM, it is observed that "such essays on her personal history as have appeared, either in England or elsewhere, are replete with mistakes or misstatements." For these he proposes to substitute "a correct if short memoir"; but, kindly and appreciative as may be Mr. Ingram's performance, there occur not a few passages in it equally "mistaken and misstated".'

THE LETTERS OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING. Edited, with Biographical Additions, by FREDERIC G. KENYON. In two vols. With Portraits. Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo, 15*s*. net.

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT BROWNING AND ELIZABETH BARRETT BARRETT. Fourth Impression. With Two Portraits and Two Facsimile Letters. 2 vols., Crown 8vo, 21*s*.

*** *These Volumes are uniform with* 'THE LETTERS OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.'

LONDON: SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE, S.W.

# ROBERT BROWNING'S WORKS
## AND 'LIFE AND LETTERS.'

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF ROBERT BROWNING. Edited and Annotated by AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C., M.P., and FREDERIC G. KENYON. In two vols., Large Crown 8vo, bound in cloth, gilt top, with a Portrait-Frontispiece to each volume, *7s. 6d.* per volume.

*** An Edition has also been printed on Oxford India Paper. This can be obtained only through booksellers, who will furnish particulars as to price, &c.

UNIFORM EDITION OF THE WORKS OF ROBERT BROWING. Seventeen vols. Small Crown 8vo, lettered separately, or in set binding, *5s.* each.

This edition contains Three Portraits of Mr. Browning at different periods of life, and a few Illustrations.

*CONTENTS OF THE VOLUMES.*

1. PAULINE: and SORDELLO.
2. PARACELSUS: and STRAFFORD.
3. PIPPA PASSES: KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES: THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES: and A SOUL'S TRAGEDY. With a Portrait of Mr. Browning.
4. A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON: COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY: and MEN AND WOMEN.
5. DRAMATIC ROMANCES: and CHRISTMAS EVE AND EASTER DAY.
6. DRAMATIC LYRICS: and LURIA.
7. IN A BALCONY: and DRAMATIS PERSONÆ. With a Portrait of Mr. Browning.
8. THE RING AND THE BOOK. Books 1 to 4. With two Illustrations.
9. THE RING AND THE BOOK. Books 5 to 8.
10. THE RING AND THE BOOK. Books 9 to 12. With a Portrait of Guido Franceschini.
11. BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE: PRINCE HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU, Saviour of Society: and FIFINE AT THE FAIR.
12. RED COTTON NIGHTCAP COUNTRY: and THE INN ALBUM.
13. ARISTOPHANES' APOLOGY, including a Transcript from Euripides, being the Last Adventure of Balaustion: and THE AGAMEMNON OF AESCHYLUS.
14. PACCHIAROTTO, and How he Worked in Distemper; with other Poems: LA SAISIAZ: and THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC.
15. DRAMATIC IDYLS, First Series: DRAMATIC IDYLS, Second Series: and JOCOSERIA.
16. FERISHTAH'S FANCIES: and PARLEYINGS WITH CERTAIN PEOPLE OF IMPORTANCE IN THEIR DAY. With a Portrait of Mr. Browning.
17. ASOLANDO: Fancies and Facts: and BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES TO THE POEMS.

ROBERT BROWNING'S WORKS. In Eight Pocket Volumes. Printed upon India Paper, with a Portrait-Frontispiece to each Volume. Fcap. 8vo, *2s. 6d.* each net in limp cloth; or *3s.* net in leather. Or the eight volumes in a gold-lettered case, *22s. 6d.* net in cloth; or *28s. 6d.* net in leather.

A SELECTION FROM THE POETICAL WORKS OF ROBERT BROWNING. SECOND SERIES, Crown 8vo, *3s. 6d.*

POCKET VOLUME OF SELECTIONS FROM THE POETICAL WORKS OF ROBERT BROWNING. Small Fcap. 8vo, bound in Art-linen, with cut or uncut edges, price ONE SHILLING. (Also supplied in leather binding.)

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF ROBERT BROWNING. By MRS. SUTHERLAND ORR. With Portrait, and Steel Engraving of Mr. Browning's Study in De Vere Gardens. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, *12s. 6d.*

LONDON: SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE, S.W.

19.9.05